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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

SOFTBALL and summer—they go together like Lunt and Fontanne. At least that's what any member of the Broadway Show League will say. A league member will also tell you, however, not to show up at one of the group's games expecting to *see* a Lunt or a Fontanne. The league is made up almost entirely of the offstage members of Broadway or Off Broadway shows, and when big-shot actors do appear it's usually for a special occasion, like throwing out the first pitch at the season opener, in April. (It's the same with work-related softball leagues everywhere: do officers or executive directors or editors ever show up unless there's a photo op before or a party after?) It's just as well that the show league is a low-wattage affair. Freedom from distraction means more attention to the game at hand. Or games at hand: when we stopped by Central Park on a recent Thursday afternoon, to watch the third round of the league's playoff season, five diamonds were astir.

To get back to the showstoppers, there are reasons for their relative absence. Some teams, such as Stagehands Local One, are off-limits by definition. Others, such as "Buddy," are based on closed shows—and some of the actors may have left town. Still others, such as the "Lost in Yonkers" gang or the Portmanteau Project (a.k.a. Song of Plaid and Teller), have so much prowess already that it's doubtful any actor wielding less than a Ruthian swing could break into the lineup. Finally, only someone schooled in Mametese could possibly keep up with the round-the-horn banter of a squad like "Grand Hotel." As an opposing batter of Merriwellian stature stepped up to the plate, the Hotel outfield cranked it up: "Play back, he's a big stick," "C'mon, plug that hole," and "A little tough D here" were among the few expletive-free locutions we heard. The umpire for this particular faceoff—there was only one official per game, stationed behind home plate—won the quip contest, however. After failing to observe a close play at third, and catching heat from both sides as a result, the ump just shook his head and muttered, "I can't call what I can't see."

The Broadway Show League's final playoffs, involving Stagehands Local One, "Lost in Yonkers," and Actors' Equity, will continue this Thursday, at noon, at Heckscher Diamond No. 2 (entrance at Central Park West and 62nd Street).

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

HE MATCHMAKER—Dorothy Loudon stars in the Thornton Wilder play. In previews. (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883.)

OPENED RECENTLY

ND THE WORLD GOES 'ROUND: THE SONGS OF KANDER & EBB—A musical revue, with Joel Blum, Bob Cuccioli, Karen Mason, Terry Burrell, and Karen Ziëmba. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21			

BREAKING LEGS—The Mafia meets Off Broadway. Vincent Gardenia and Joseph Mascolo play a pair of mobsters who back a new play in order to win a young dramatist for Gardenia's daughter. Tom Dulack wrote the comedy; John Tillinger directed it. With Victor Argo, Larry Storch, Nicolas Surovy, and, above all, Susan Giosa as the daughter who spins the plot. (Reviewed in our issue of 6/3/91.) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

DAMON RUNYON'S TALES OF BROADWAY—A one-man show conceived and performed by John Martello. (Double Image Theatre, 15 Vandam St. 924-1120.)

GETTING MARRIED—Simon Jones, Scott Wentworth, J. D. Cullum, and Walter Bobbie are the standouts in this spirited production of Shaw's farce about the legal and societal pitfalls of marriage. The play proves surprisingly apt and delightful (though the director, Stephen Porter, seems to have left a first-rate cast entirely to its own devices). New York Shaw doesn't get any better than this. (7/8/91) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200. Closes Aug. 25.)

THE GOOD TIMES ARE KILLING ME—The cartoonist Lynda Barry devised this memory play of words and pop tunes about a racially mixed neighborhood. At the heart of it is the friendship of two little girls, one white, the other black, who are delightfully portrayed by Angela Goethals and Chandra Wilson. The undercurrent of serious comment on race doesn't add much, but every humorous scene scores a bull's-eye. The cast also includes Wendell Pierce and Holly Felton. Mark Brokaw directed. The show was seen this spring at Second Stage. (5/6/91) (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

"Penn & Teller Rot in Hell"

LIPS TOGETHER, TEETH APART—Two couples share a beach house on Fire Island over the Fourth of July weekend, in Terrence McNally's very funny play about a number of serious matters. With Roxanne Hart, Anthony Heald, Nathan Lane, and Deborah Rush. (7/8/91) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

LOST IN YONKERS—There's not one glimmer of honesty or authenticity in this family melodrama by Neil Simon. Set in Yonkers during the Second World War, it's about what happens when a cowering, pathetic man has to leave his two adolescent sons with his intimidating mother for the better part of a year. (3/11/91) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)

MAMBO MOUTH—John Leguizamo portrays seven Hispanic characters in a one-man show. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477. Closes Aug. 25.)

MISS SAIGON—Oh, the horror! The horror! (4/29/91) (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.)

PAGEANT—A musical spoof of beauty contests. Book and lyrics by Bill Russell and Frank Kelly and music by Albert Evans. Conceived and directed by Robert Longbottom. (Blue Angel, 321 W. 44th St. 262-3333.)

PENN & TELLER ROT IN HELL—Seen recently on the Great White Way, the dynamic duo are now performing their repertoire of tricks Off Broadway. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.)

RED SCARE ON SUNSET—If you're in the market for a lot of laughs (and a strange catharsis), you couldn't do better than this latest comedy of manners by the actor/writer/farceur Charles Busch—about a Hollywood personality whose paranoid anti-Stalinist fantasies turn out to be true. With this satire on politics, theatre, and sexuality, Busch creates a showcase for his own subtle talents and those of the actress Julie Halston. (8/5/91) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782.)

THE SECRET GARDEN—This lovely musical adaptation of the classic children's story by Frances Hodgson Burnett isn't just a kiddie show. Subtle, charming, intelligent, and wholly literary in its approach to adaptation, it manages both to be faithful to the spirit of the book and to comment on the particular moment in time that produced it. (5/13/91) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

SONG OF SINGAPORE—A musical with a promising concept: turn a Polish veterans' hall into a Singapore night club, circa 1941, and spill murder and mayhem onto the premises. Unfortunately, the lavish settings (by John Lee Beatty) and the musical talent (led by the winsome and versatile Donna Murphy) cannot conceal a very thin story and a host of excruciatingly bad jokes. Another problem: on a busy night the seating arrangements here can be extremely cramped. (17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. 228-0844.)

THE WILL ROGERS FOLLIES—The sets by Tony Walton, the direction and choreography by Tommy Tune, the costumes by Willa Kim, and the row upon row of Ziegfeld girls make a feast for the eyes, but the funny bone and heart are neglected. Keith Carradine makes an engaging, amusing Rogers, but that is not enough, despite Cy Coleman's pleasant score. (5/13/91) (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.)

LONG RUNS

CATS: Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.)... CITY OF ANGELS: Larry Gelbart, dramatist; Cy Coleman, composer; Billy Byers, arranger; and Michael Blakemore, director, are all in top form in this sharp, jokey musical satire about Hollywood in the forties. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)... THE FANTASTICKS: The longest-running long run turned thirty-one in May. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.)... FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1991½: This newly revised revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the barbed lyrics. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)... FOREVER PLAID: Stuart Ross's loving tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.)... GRAND HOTEL: The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show, but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)... LES MISÉRABLES: The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)... NUNSENSE: A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.)... ONCE ON THIS ISLAND: An enchanting musical by Lynn Ahrens and

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CRACKING UP

The Municipal Building, on Centre Street, at the Manhattan base of the Brooklyn Bridge, lost its chance at a world record because of a technicality. The scaffolding that now blankets the massive, seventy-seven-year-old McKim, Mead & White design is probably the largest ever built, but the Guinness Book of Records has limited its scope to "freestanding scaffolding" (and dropped the category altogether last year), whereas this construction—a dream jungle gym of corrugated aluminum platforms, wooden planks, and thirty-eight miles of tubular steel—is anchored into the building's granite-block façade. The project got under way in the spring of 1988, after a study had revealed that some of the stones, which weigh up to five tons, were beginning to crack and loosen; it took a year just to build the scaffolding. The job at hand, which is expected to cost the city about thirty-six million dollars, involves removing about a tenth of the stones; repairing or replacing them; scraping rust off the building's steel support beams and repainting them with a protective coating; and then putting the stones back into place. Since the stones are of different sizes and shapes, this last step is like playing a giant game of Tetris.

The Municipal Building fills an entire city block, and consists of a twenty-five-story base topped by a fifteen-story, dome-capped tower. ("A neoclassical birthday cake" is how John Beckman, the director of communications for the city's Department of General Services, describes it.) Its tenants are city agencies, among them the Borough President's Office, the Finance Department, and WNYC, the public television and radio station. Beckman says that the project is ahead of schedule: the repair work is expected to be completed by December, and the scaffolding will probably be down by mid-1992. The building, he explains, turned out to be in better shape than planners had expected. As for the scaffolding's being the world's largest, Beckman says he has "not the slightest doubt. No one has come up with a bigger one."

Stephen Flaherty. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.). . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.). . . **SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION:** You're best off knowing nothing about the John Guare play other than that it represents a perfect meeting of the playwright and the director Jerry Zaks. Out of a true story—one apparently about celebrity and Good Samaritanism—Guare has fashioned a wistful comedy about race, class, money, imagination, collective conscience, individual psyche, and the impulse toward art. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center, 239-6200.)

DANCE

SOMETIMES one is brought to believe in Providence after all. Take the case of Mozart. Suppose that, instead of a love for lively step dancing, the greatest composer of the Western world had contracted a passion for, say, pitching horseshoes or feeding fish, and that *that* had keyed the metabolism of his music. Suppose that he had written pieces by the pound to accompany these endeavors, rather than for the balls of the Viennese court. Suppose you were attending a Mozart festival during the bicentenary year of his death, and that nearly every scrap of his horseshoe or fish music was programmed. There are many reasons to value eighteenth-century European social dances, and not the least is their centrality to Mozart's work.

Recently, we were made privy to a few other reasons during the "Mozart Experience" weekend, put on by Roger Norrington (in consultation with Nicholas Kenyon) at the Mostly Mozart Festival. The subject of the weekend was the music that Mozart composed in 1791, the last year of his life. A sizable portion of this music was specifically designed to be danced to, and it was so effective that we saw toes tapping and fingers ticking in time all over the audience. Meanwhile, onstage members of a performing group called the Early Dance Project easily convinced us that to perform a minuet with one's body as a Mozart Menuett hallows one's ear must be one of the sweetest experiences to be had by a human being in this life. In the next life, a comparable experience might be watching an audience of composers who spurned dance music as too trivial when they were on earth go slack-winged at a choreographic setting of Mozart's dance music by George Balanchine for wiser angels.

IN TOWN

Feld Ballets/NY—Final performances of a "preview" engagement. Aug. 12, Aug. 15, and Aug. 17, all at 8: "Common Ground," "Endsong," and "The Jig Is Up."... ¶ Aug. 13 and Aug. 16 at 8: "Intermezzo No. 1," "Clave," "Evoe," and "Contra Pose."... ¶ Aug. 14 at 8 and Aug. 17 at 2:30: "A Footstep of Air," "Clave," "Evoe," and "Skara Brae." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800.)

Pilar Rioja—In a program of classical Spanish and flamenco dance: "Danzas," "Danzas Nuevas," "Soleá," "Tener La Esperanza," "La Farruca," "Café de Chinitas," "El Vito," and "Sevillanas del Siglo XVII." (Repertorio Español, Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. 889-2850. Aug. 12-16 and Aug. 20 at 8; Aug. 17 at 3; Aug. 18 at 7; and Aug. 21 at 2 and 8. Ms. Rioja's engagement will continue through Sept. 2.)

OUT OF TOWN

Jacob's Pillow—At the Ted Shawn Theatre: The Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, Aug. 13-17. In "Introduction and Allegro," "Home," "Beyond a Cliff," and "Blues for the Jungle."... Martine van Hamel's New Amsterdam Ballet, Aug. 20-24. Members of the Washington Ballet will join Ms. van Hamel's group for this engagement.... ¶ At the Studio/Theatre: Ann Carlson, Aug. 14-18. Ms. Carlson will present "Flag and "Blanket."... Kenneth King, Aug. 21-22. Mr. King will perform solo works. A screening of films by Pooh Kaye will round out the program. (Becket, Mass. 1-413 243-0745.)

NIGHT LIFE

CABARET types always seem to find an excuse to celebrate Cole Porter, so it's not surprising that this year, the centennial of his birth, has seen a broad, high-profile spectrum of hat-tipping. Even the MTV crowd has weighed in, with last year's "Red, Hot + Blue," a recording/video project. While that undertaking, perhaps trying to appeal to novitiates, stuck to the composer's warhorses, a current Porter tribute at Rainbow & Stars (through August 31) digs deeper. Th cabaret heavies assembled here—the vocalists Mary Cleere Haran, Terri Klausner, and Helen Schneider, and the pianist-vocalists Bruce W. Coyle and Ronny Whyte—offer plenty of familiar numbers, but those who come to hear a hit parade might be disappointed. What they will find is a number of curiosities—"By the Mississinewah," a hammy number concerning a polygamous Indian chief; "I Happen to Like New York," a cleverer paean than Sinatra's unofficial anthem; a lit-crit satire called "Georgia Sand"; and several others.

The three women have distinct styles: Ms. Klausner is a vivacious belter, Ms. Schneider is sultry and impassioned, Ms. Haran exudes warmth and confidence—we found her the most appealing. Each had several solos, as did the smooth and likable Mr. Whyte; the ensemble numbers came off well, with the group weaving effective harmonies. The show's conception is a bit stagy: the tuxedoed pianists play face-to-face baby grands as the women, in cocktail black, sashay around and strike dramatic poses. During the aforementioned ode to New York, for example (sung by Mr. Whyte), the women gaze fixedly at the million-dollar view out the cabaret's window. Some of the lesser-known material might just as well remain that way—Porter's usual biting society-page chatter can sound cutesy in his weaker numbers. But this revue does offer some strong performances, as well as a fresh perspective in a Porter-intoxicated year.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town.... ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Abilene Café, 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (255-7373)—A reincarnated blues bar: the firs Abilene led a low-profile life in the Eas Twenties until 1987; this one opened la year. The club, which is spacious, cheerful and as plain as a brown paper bag, won' win any prizes for atmosphere, but it has al the ingredients of a good blues bar: chea grub, a modest cover charge, and a non trendy crowd.

Arthur's Tavern, 57 Grove St. (675-6879)—Thirty-year-olds in love call Mabel Godwi "a *scandal*." Now in her seventies, she re mains a singer of racy jazz numbers, devout chatterer, a wearer of gold lamé suit and a pianist who perks along quite nicely t the accompaniment of a snare and a standu bass. Ms. Godwin performs Fridays and Sat urdays from nine-thirty. On Sundays, co nettist Lee Lorenz leads the Creole Cookin Jazz Band, on Mondays the Grove Stree Stompers do their Dixieland thing, and Tues days through Thursdays belong to Al Bund Arthur's is currently decorated for the hol

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Gil Scott-Heron at the Blue Note

days—Christmas, New Year's, Halloween, and St. Patrick's Day.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—It's everything a cabaret should be: sleek, elegant, intimate, and slighty decadent. It also offers something that other cabarets do not: tapas, which come from the Spanish restaurant adjoining the club. The unpredictable but always entertaining trio known as **Betty** is on hand Aug. 13-17.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—Many musicians who visit this jazz house are honored—if that's the word—by having their portraits done, "in concert," by the house artist. These impressionistic renderings round out a glossy décor that includes flying-saucer light fixtures, burgundy velvet drapes, and some neon wading birds. The schedule, in part: **Herman Foster's** trio Aug. 14-15, the **James Newton** quartet Aug. 16-17, and **Manny Duran's** sextet on Aug. 18. Music from nine. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—This blue-on-blue club is the place to find big-league jazz artists; it's an institution and it knows it: how many other clubs sell their own belt buckles? **Gil Scott-Heron** and **Amnesia Express** take over Aug. 13-18; from Aug. 20, jazz-rock drummer **Billy Cobham's** group trades sets with a duo comprising guitarists **Larry Coryell** and **Vic Juris.** Music from nine. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A big, pleasant room where they pack them in until someone says uncle. The **Fabulous Thunderbirds** claim Aug. 12; Matraca Berg and David Wilcox are in on Aug. 19; John Gorka and Julie Gold perform on Aug. 20; and "Gratefully Yours," a Grateful Dead tribute, takes place on Aug. 22. Shows at eight and eleven. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar where, if your neighbors coöperate, you can hear the beautiful, singular sound of musicians thinking. Two upcoming trios: **Buster Williams, Mulgrew Miller,** and **Greg Hutchinson** Aug. 12-17; and **Kirk Lightsey, Marcus Belgrave,** and **Cecil Mc Bee** beginning on Aug. 19. Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

Café Sin-é, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—An unpretentious storefront café devoted to such things as Irish stew and the *Irish Times.* There's no stage per se, but bohemian musicians gather around a piano and work up some wistful sets while bohemian patrons sit writing in journals, rolling cigarettes, or lingering over one of the two varieties of beer sold here: Budweiser and Rolling Rock. Sin-é means "that's it" in Gaelic and is not Sinéad O'Connor's nickname. The café is a nice place to while away an hour, and you never know who'll turn up and tune up. Music generally begins at about eight-thirty.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—Pianist-singer-songwriter **Kurt Wieting** can currently be heard in Bemelmans' Bar, a swanky place whose walls are graced by Ludwig Bemelmans' fanciful murals. Sets from nine-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays.

Cat Club, 76 E. 13th St. (505-0090)—Every Sunday night, this club, usually dominated by heavy-metal fans, is ceded to a gang of Lindy Hop enthusiasts called the New York Swing Dance Society. On Aug. 18, they dance to the sounds of **Ray Abrams'** big band. Music from eight to midnight.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—The city's most famed rock club, a dark, narrow cave with neon-beer-sign stalactites and ancestral graffiti, is part sacred burial ground and part historic landmark, but it hasn't succumbed to nostalgia: new and used bands of every stripe continue to pass through nightly. Music from nine-thirty Sundays through Thursdays and from ten-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays.

Condon's, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—In the shadow of the Zeckendorf Towers sits this stucco-walled grotto, whose intimate scale makes it a fine spot for jazz. **Harry (Sweets) Edison's All-Star Quintet** is in action Aug. 13-18. **Oliver Lake's** quintet begins work on Aug. 20. Music after nine.

Continental Divide, 25 Third Ave., at St. Marks Pl. (529-6924)—Young, loud, and rude. N.Y.U. students like it here, as do punks, weekend punks, and anyone with a taste for rough-and-tumble garage-rock music. There's not a lot to look at—except the band and your fellow-patrons. The Waldos perform on Aug. 17, the Blue Chieftains on Aug. 18, God Street Wine on Aug. 19, and Go To Blazes and the Senders on Aug. 20. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at ten, Fridays and Saturdays at eleven.

Dan Lynch, 221 Second Ave., at 14th St. (677-0911)—Outside Dan Lynch, you'll come across a lot of suspicious characters who'll claim to know you; inside you'll find a pupil-dilating, brown-on-brown bar decorated with remnants of a birch tree. The place brightens up considerably at ten with a variety of live blues, including vamps of the "put on your red dress" variety.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—Through the iffy-looking side door, down the famous fun-house tunnel that's lined with mirrors and corrugated tin, and down a short flight of stairs, you'll finds this softly lit, low-ceilinged, roughly Manhattan-shaped jazz preserve. **Helen Merrill** is here Aug. 13-18, backed by a trio. Ms. Merrill, who was popular in jazz circles in the fifties, began performing in New York again a couple of years ago, after a long hiatus. She has a cool, vibratoless voice that is especially affecting on ballads, and her singing often has a quality of airy solitude that brings to mind Miles Davis's or Chet Baker's trumpet playing. **Phil Woods,** the fiery, bebop-leaning alto saxophonist, leads a quintet starting on Aug. 20. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **Les Paul,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—A frat house for the avant-garde. In some ways, the Knitting Factory doesn't really belong in New York: the cover charge is too reasonable, the management is too laid-back, the audiences are too polite. It's a slice of post-collegiate counter-culture that somehow landed on Houston Street. **Das Damen** and others are here on Aug. 14; Carlos Ward, Pheeroan Aklaff, and others claim Aug. 15; **Eugene Chadbourne,** a musical wild man who often plays on homemade instruments and who isn't afraid of dissonance, appears on Aug. 16. Music after nine.

Lauterbach's Brooklyn Beat, 335 Prospect Ave., at Sixth Ave., Brooklyn. (1-718 788-9140)—It's an improbable bar in an unlikely location, but Lauterbach's has spawned a scene of sorts—and the owners have a wall of press clippings to prove it. In its short life as a rock venue (it has a longer one as a neighborhood bar—the kind of place where Archie Bunker might feel at home), the club has become HQ for a tight little community of Brooklyn bands, a development that has apparently brought in enough money for the club's recent facelift. Still, it's not as though you need a tux to get in the door.

Lone Star Roadhouse, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—Spiffed-up theatre patrons walk by this club's façade—a Silver Eagle bus, with tires you can kick—and scratch their heads. Inside, big bearded guys with cowboy hats rub elbows at the bar while newcomers study the Texas memorabilia and, upstairs, the display of vintage Gibson guitars. **Etta James** is here Aug. 13-15. Ms. James, whose career started in the fifties, has produced some powerful soul material, such as the record "Tell Mama" and the aching ballad "I'd Rather Go Blind." She's a spirited performer onstage, she tends to bring out the bawdy aspect of the blues, bumping and grinding with her considerable heft. Music after nine. Dining.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—A good sound system, cheap drinks, and a regular-guy atmosphere make this restaurant-bar, home of the Hoboken Sound and of the phrase "jangly guitars," a popular hangout for musicians and their followers. Singer-guitarist **Luka Bloom,** who'll be here on Aug. 19, has a new record due in September. His first offering, titled "Riverside," was a fine, spare record—a sort of Irishman's "Nebraska." Bloom's songs are mostly about blood being thicker than water and love being thicker than anything. In concert, he also works in a jubilant cover of the Waterboys' "This Is the Sea" and a half-campy, half-earnest rendition of L.L. Cool J's "I Need Love" (the latter is on the new album). Bloom has quite a cult following in these parts, and his shows are almost always packed to the rafters.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—There's more to Michael's Pub than Woody Allen, whose occasional Monday-night Dixieland binges have given the place a little star cachet. Non-filmmakers can usually be found onstage here the rest of the week, in a main dining room that strives for the appearance of a British pub but looks more like a good old American family restaurant. **Terry Waldo** is currently directing a program of "bordello music," with an ensemble that includes clarinettist Orange Kellin, trumpeter Bill Dillard, and vocalist Frozine Thomas. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A moondust-in-your-hair cabaret where a club soda costs, well, a *lot.* There are plenty of niceties if you're so inclined: an ear-popping express elevator in which you can mingle with the famous; tables scattered with plastic diamonds and sapphires; and rest-room attendants who hover near the sink asking, "Is the water too warm?" A Cole Porter revue called "What a Swell Party" can currently be found here. Shows from nine. Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—It may look like a plain old steakhouse, and the photos on the walls may look like Sardi's leftovers, but in the back room you'll find swing bands, Dixieland combos, and couples sprung from the legacy of Fred and Ginger. On Tuesdays, beginning at eight-thirty, music is provided by **Vince Giordano and the Nighthawks.** Michael Bergman's thirteen-piece swing band and John Twomey's big band play on Aug. 14; Stan Rubin's big band holds forth on Aug. 15; and on Aug. 17, Freddie Moore, a washboard player who was a member of the original King Oliver band, celebrates his ninety-first birthday here. Show times vary.

Ritz, 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—This decaying theatre was once the famous Studio 54, where the late Steve Rubell's henchmen helped popularize the policy of turning away the unbeautiful. Now it's the home of one of the city's biggest, oldest, and loudest rock clubs, which was formerly housed in a decaying ballroom in the East Village. The club features a broad stage, mobile-home-size speakers, plenty of room to shimmy, and, for the sedentary, a giant Big Brother video screen. **Widespread Panic,** a hard-rocking Athens, Georgia, export that recently made its big-label début, performs on Aug. 15, with **Electric Hot Tuna.** Shows begin at nine Sundays through Thursdays, and at eleven Fridays and Saturdays.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—An itinerary stop for the international jazz groupies who, on any given night can be seen roaming the streets of the Village Up front, there's a glass-enclosed sidewalk café; in back is a larger room, with a pressed-tin ceiling, red brick, and more pinewood than a ski lodge. **Paul Bley, Jimmy Giuffre,** and **Gary Peacock** work out here Aug. 13-18; the South African-bred pianist-flutist-composer **Abdullah Ibrahim** and his band, **Ekaya,** get under way on Aug. 20. The electrified big band of the late Gil Evans, now under the direction of his son the trumpeter Miles Evans, is in action on Mondays. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—This windowless, pie-shaped

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basement has an illustrious past that reads like a history of jazz. The décor is homey and a little faded, like an attic full of memorabilia. The HARPER BROTHERS are in charge Aug. 13-18, and JOE LOVANO'S quintet commences on Aug. 20. Mondays are reserved for the VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA. Music after nine-thirty.

WETLANDS, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Two floors of no-nuke veggie entertainment and consciousness-raising. Listen to bands play in the Summer of Love-muralled back room; buy a tie-dyed T-shirt at the Volkswagen-bus curio shop; catch up on current events at the bulletin board and community calendar. Or, if you'd rather just be mellow, crash out in the basement hippie love pad. KRS-ONE AND BOOGIE DOWN PRODUCTIONS are in charge on Aug. 14. KRS is a sort of rapper-for-hire, who lately seems to be turning up everywhere—R.E.M.'s latest album, TV's "In Living Color." EUGENE CHADBOURNE (at the Knitting Factory also this week) appears on Aug. 18. Music at ten.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A rarity among jazz clubs: somewhere you'd go to eat even if there were no music. The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. LYNNE ARRIALE, GENE BERTONCINI, and BOB CRANSHAW claim Aug. 12-17; RONNIE MATHEWS and JOE SANTIAGO are on duty Aug. 19-21. Music from eight. Closed Sundays.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

"FRANKLIN FURNACE'S ASYLUM AT THE ANCHORAGE"—A series of performance works curated by people at Franklin Furnace and performed at the Brooklyn Bridge Anchorage. Aug. 10 and Aug. 15: "Bob Flanagan's SICK," a performance piece that the press material describes as "not for the faint of heart."... ¶ Aug. 16-17: Black Market International, a group of performance artists from various European countries who, to use a dinosaur of a colloquialism, "do their own thing." (Cadman Plaza West and Old Front St., Brooklyn. Evenings at 8. For reservations, call 619-1955. The series continues through Sept. 7.)

ART

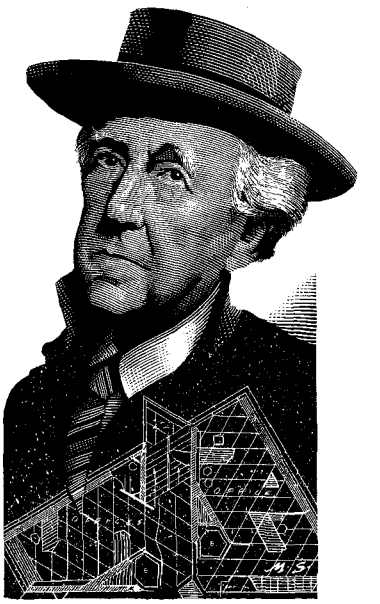
TWO summers ago, in Paris, we saw a huge, eagerly anticipated exhibition called "Magiciens de la Terre" ("Magicians of the Earth"), for which works of all kinds, by artists from around the world, had been brought together, it seemed, to form a sort of visual analogue to world music. The show, naturally, was controversial. It was probably criticized most heavily for failing to draw distinctions, both helpful and "correct," between, say, an intellectually rarefied, successful but noncommercial Western "name" artist like Lawrence Weiner and an African artist working within the populist, commercial, folkloric, and quasi-anonymous tradition of, for example, village sign painting. "Magiciens" may have been conceptually flawed, and it was certainly extremely uneven in quality, but we nevertheless viewed it as something close to a godsend. Simply put, we saw wonderful objects that we would not see elsewhere.

Prominent among these wonderful objects was a selection of the carved and painted scale models of coffins made by the Ghanaian Kane Kwei. His cheerful sarcophagi are designed to take you heavenward in style—in a wooden box fashioned, for instance, after a Mercedes-Benz, a hen, an airplane, or a cacao pod—and New Yorkers may now examine, er, life-size versions of these uncommon items in both sections of the two-part exhibition "Africa Explores: Twentieth-Century African Art," now on view at the New Museum (583 Broadway; through August 18) and at the Center for African Art (54 East 68th Street; through December 29).

This exhibition, we suspect, learned some lessons from "Magiciens." There are the overlapping artists—Chéri Samba, the vividly talented and wildly sexist painter-moralist from Zaire, is another "Magiciens" participant also included here. The New York show, furthermore, tries hard not to echo the French mistakes. A working typology, for starters, has been established, and distinctions have usefully—if a bit prissily—been drawn between "New Functional Art," "Traditional Art," "International Art," "Urban Art," and "'Extinct' Art," which is of course the kind Picasso and the old white hunters knew best.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—Walter Annenberg, who made a name for himself as the publisher of *TV Guide*, turned down a billion-dollar offer for his modern-art collection and chose instead the nobler path of philanthropy by bequeathing it to this museum several months ago. The gift of the collection, which had been perhaps the finest grouping of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings still in private hands, sets a standard of excellence for future patrons of the arts. The exhibition begins with some exquisite small works by Fantin-Latour, followed by two rooms, devoted to Monet, van Gogh, Gauguin, and Cézanne, that would be the pride of any museum. These rooms include some of the collection's finest works, such as Monet's "Poppy Field, Argenteuil" (1875), Gauguin's "The Siesta" (1892-94), and Cézanne's "The House with the Cracked Walls" (1892-94), all of which were purchased by Annenberg in 1983 from his sister Enid Haupt. Farther on are some very good early-twentieth-century works, including Picasso's haunting "At the Lapin Agile" (1905), an important but somewhat overwrought Vuillard, a beautiful Matisse, and a very pretty Bonnard; these works, however, are not up to the same level as the great Impressionist ones. Through Oct. 13.... ¶ "The Sculpture of Indonesia," which includes much material on display outside its native land for the first time, exposes us to the fascinating, if only partially knowable, world of Hindu and Buddhist sculpture. The show begins with a few magnificent Bronze Age works—such as a massive ceremonial tablet and axe with fanciful shapes and crisp geometric details in shallow relief—that are included just to indicate that ceremonial object-making did not begin with the arrival of the Indian deities. Many of these prehistoric pieces bear a strong resemblance to contemporaneous ones from China and what is now Vietnam; it is virtually impossible to distinguish a number of the Hindu and Buddhist works here from their Indian antecedents. But when an Indonesian sculptural identity emerges, it is hard to surpass. A stone sculpture of Prajnaparamita, the goddess of transcendental wisdom, is considered perhaps Indonesia's most important sculpture, and it is indeed the embodiment of grace. It was carved around 1300, in East Java, at the same time and in the same place as a very different statue of Bhairava, a fierce and demonic four-armed deity who wears a necklace of small severed heads, sits on a jackal, and rests his feet on a mound of human skulls. There are many other contrasts in the exhibition, and numerous sculptural wonders, including one of the five hundred and four seated Buddhas from Borobudur, the largest Buddhist temple in the world. Through Aug. 18.... ¶ If you need a break from the blockbusters, or the line for the restaurant is too long, you might wander through the Islamic galleries to "The Perfect Page," a small, glorious display of a few dozen illuminated manuscripts from the museum's extensive collection of Persian, Ottoman, and Indian works from the fourteenth century through the nineteenth. As one might expect, there are remarkably detailed volumes of the Koran, with their fanciful Arabic script, and there is also an amazing Ottoman calendar in the form of a scroll, which indicates not simply the date but also the aspects of the sun, the phases of the moon, and the times of prayer in the various seasons. Also included is an exquisite sultan's cipher, similar to the one included in the museum's recent Süleyman the Magnificent extravaganza; this piece must be history's first decorative whiplash shape, anticipating the very modern Art Nouveau lines that followed much later. Through Aug. 18.... ¶ A hundred and fifty sculptures, drawings, and decorative objects by Paul Manship (1885-1966). Through Sept. 1.... NOTE: The museum's roof garden, planted with nine sculptures by Rodin, is open when the weather permits. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)



Frank Lloyd Wright at the American Craft Museum

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Nudes," a show of fifty photographs by Lee Friedlander taken over the past twelve years. Through Oct. 8.... ¶ In the "Projects" space is a very affecting video installation by the French film theorist and video artist Thierry Kuntzel, titled "Winter (The Death of Robert Walser)." The work, a triptych consisting of three video "panels" projected on the wall, reunites the medium with the fine-art tradition, from which it has become increasingly severed. In the central panel, the camera pans four times very slowly back and forth above the body of a naked man. At first, the man is covered with a veil of softly folded fabric, which rises and falls with his breathing. In the second shot, the fabric becomes sheerer, the man more visible. In the third it seems as if he has stopped breathing. In the fourth the veil is gone. Finally, this image disintegrates into what looks like a field of video snow, and then the cycle begins again. The man, who is black, is depicted with a clinical sensuousness, like a hybrid of Christ in Grünewald's "Isenheim Altarpiece" and the carved-marble drapery folds of Michelangelo and Bernini. As the cycle progresses, the flanking panels fade slowly from a deep television cobalt blue to an infinite video white. Through Sept. 2.... ¶ Ad Reinhardt's single-color abstractions from the late fifties and sixties are often considered to be the Nordic lodestars of minimalism. With this retrospective, MOMA, for one, has certainly built a powerful case for such a judgment, and, in its inimitable way, has tried to bring the gavel down on that view as well. It is a very intense and occasionally eerie exhibition. Its concluding sequence, for instance, is a bright room filled with twenty of the artist's black-on-black paintings, arranged in a rhythmically stentorian fashion in which luminous

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

nuances—Reinhardt's infinitesimal gradations of tone and his latent imagery, most notably the nearly ubiquitous cruciforms—have been all but obliterated. The impact is terrifically jolting, like a door slammed shut or a gunshot fired in the concluding scene of a play. But in a strange way it is also anticlimactic. Before getting to this last, black room, viewers have slid through a sort of Wonderland rabbit chute of rooms in which colors first appear in natural abundance, then are gradually distilled, and finally are apotheosized into firmaments of blue, then red. In terms of pure, retinal drama, the high point of the show occurs during the transition from earth to Heaven, as it were, in a room given to half-tones and seemingly disembodied clarion notes against taupe, mauve, and puce-colored grounds, and in the segue from this room into one that is very suddenly, very astrally blue. It is a breathtaking moment, both disorienting and exhilarating. Visually, if not polemically, the hot spot of the show is right there. Through Sept. 2. . . . ¶ A small show of posters, catalogues, ads, and magazine covers by the Swiss graphic designer Herbert Matter (1907-84). . . . NOTE: The museum's sculpture garden, at 14 W. 54th St., is open, free, on Fridays and Saturdays from 6 to 10, with musicians from the Juilliard School performing at 7:30. This summer's program is dedicated to the music of Erik Satie. (The museum is open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until early 1992.

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—Over the past decade it became a near-cliché to invoke John Baldessari's influence as a teacher. As if to assault paradox—and, perhaps, ironically to embrace Baldessari's pedagogical reputation—this retrospective has been organized into eight loosely chronological, didactically labelled rooms, each of which is further equipped with its own printed, loose-leaf, lesson-cum-exam-question page. In Room 1, for example, we pluck a page with the heading "Lessons on Art and Art Making" and, looking at the wall, find "Wrong," a 1967 word-and-image painting that consists of a silk-screened picture of a man standing in front of a tree on a suburban street. "'Wrong,'" we read, "breaks the rule that one should never take a picture of someone in front of a tree because it will look as if the tree were growing out of the person's head." It's interesting how much Baldessari eventually picked up from his ex-students and others. If the lessons of the first two rooms provide virtual blueprints for the likes of David Salle, Richard Prince, and Jenny Holzer, the last rooms declare that important teachers never stop learning. Tips from Salle, in particular, are quite obvious by the close of this show, but—more unexpectedly—so are the effects, it seems, of shaped canvases by the abstract painter Elizabeth Murray. Through Oct. 20. . . . ¶ "American Life in American Art" presents nearly a hundred and seventy twentieth-century paintings and sculptures from the museum's permanent collection. . . . ¶ The long-neglected decorative artist Hunt Diederich (1884-1953)—a contemporary of Elie Nadelman, whose work Diederich's faintly suggests—was born in Hungary, the son of a Prussian cavalry officer and a proper-Bostonian artist. After some schooling in Switzerland, he came to the States to live with his maternal grandfather, the painter William Morris Hunt; then he went out West to become a cowboy. His *animalier* sculptures, cowboyish and not, were a hit in Paris at the 1913 Salon d'Automne, where "Greyhounds" was bought by a Baron Rothschild. This high-pitched curriculum vitae—amplified by sojourns in Fascist Germany, and a crippling injury caused by a fall from scaffolding—seems to have affected his thinking. In 1947, he sent out anti-Semitic material by mail in envelopes marked "with compliments from Members of the National Institute of Arts and Letters." He was expelled from the institute, and died not long after, while working on a bas-relief for the A.S.P.C.A. headquarters in Manhattan. Diederich's art is fanciful and filigreed: wrought-iron fire screens, trivets, and candlesticks, for instance, with fox and ibex motifs. Bravo to the Whitney for this rediscovery. Through Sept. 29. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, 11 to 6.)

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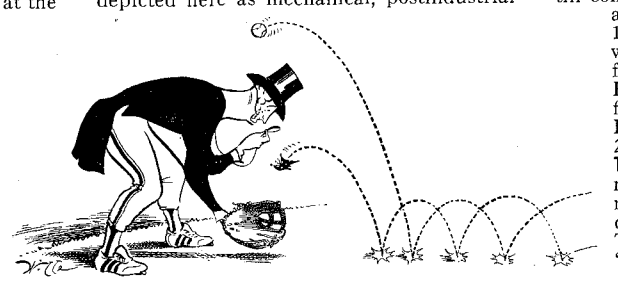
Whitney Museum Downtown, 33 Maiden Lane—"Constructing American Identity." This exhibition, organized by fellows in the Whitney Museum's Independent Study Program, attempts to explore the unspoken political agendas of art exhibitions by recalling three historic shows of American contemporary art: one from the 1939 World's Fair, which embraced democratic values by combining social-realist and abstract painting; a travelling exhibition of the Abstract Expressionists, from 1958-59, which portrayed America's boundless individualism during the Cold War; and a show of Pop art from the 1964 World's Fair, which communicated consumer affluence and the merger of culture with the marketplace. The current show does not attempt to re-create the exhibitions, but instead includes works from the Whitney's collection by artists who were represented in these shows, along with lengthy wall texts, fascinating period quotes by the artists and their critics, and occasional magazine articles and advertisements. The written material ranges from several articulate quotes from Robert Motherwell about the antibourgeois spirit of artists leading bourgeois lives—a paradox that has come to be seen as the Catch-22 of late modernism—to an ad for the Leo Castelli gallery that shows a map of Europe being conquered by the gallery's artists. The ad celebrates cultural imperialism with all the bright-eyed optimism that characterized America's Valhallan early sixties. The exhibition is a bit of a curatorial disaster, and it's further dampened by minor paintings and prints, particularly in the case of Pop art. But as an illustrated essay this display brings some current art-historical thinking to an audience that might never read an article on the subject. Through Aug. 30. (Open Mondays through Fridays, 11 to 6.)

Whitney Museum at Equitable Center, Seventh Ave. at 52nd St.—"Steppin' Out: New York Nightlife, 1900-45." Seventy-four paintings, prints, and drawings, including works by John Sloan, Guy Pène du Bois, Mabel Dwight, Peggy Bacon, and Reginald Marsh. Through Aug. 17. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 11 to 5, and Thursday evenings until 7:30; Saturdays, noon to 5.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—Although the museum now has to close whole floors at certain times of the day because of a two-million-dollar cut in city support, you can always see Chris Burden's "Medusa's Head," which is the most recent in an excellent series of lobby installations by contemporary artists. Burden's fourteen-foot suspended Medusa, which has yet to turn a single mortal to stone, is overrun with creepy, crawling railroad tracks instead of snakes. There are hundreds of them working their way in and out of a purgatorial rutted-rock landscape meant to resemble an asteroid, transporting rock to who knows where. Trains, which usually are symbols of industrialization, Western expansion, and progress, are depicted here as mechanical, postindustrial chain gangs. This is a very strong work. Through Sept. 2. . . . ¶ "Quattrocento," a small exhibition of a few dozen early-Renaissance panel paintings from Italy, shows off another of the many fine corners of the Brooklyn Museum's vast collection. The works are all small and most of them are minor, but they cogently present the history of the quattrocento, giving a sense of its rich spread throughout northern Italy. The show begins with a charming trecento "Last Supper," attributed to Vitale de Bologne, that exhibits archaic perspective, and a marvellous triptych by Maso di Banco, one of Giotto's most gifted pupils, that in one panel depicts a elongated Christ on a blood-spattered Cross Flemish influence is evident in a tender portrait of St. Jerome by Donato dei Bardi, and the lit-velvet drapery of Venice is represented by a depiction of St. James Major by Carlo Crivelli. A curiously stormy world view is presented by the Marchigian Lorenzo d'Alessandro da San Severino, and a mysterious sense of time standing still haunts a little "Venus and Mars" attributed to Palma Vecchio. That work, dated circa 1515, is the latest in the show. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)



American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"The Way to Independence," a show of more than five hundred artifacts dealing with the upheaval endured by three generations of Hidatsa Indians and their eventual relocation to a reservation called Independence. Through Nov. 3. . . . ¶ Thirty-five large-format color photographs of endangered North American fish, including lampreys, mud minnows, shiners, and trout. Through Sept. 22. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—"Frank Lloyd Wright: Preserving an Architectural Heritage" is a show of more than seventy pieces of furniture, art-glass windows, lights, and other decorative pieces spanning sixty years of the artist's career. Starts Aug. 15. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 5, and Tuesday and Friday evenings until 8.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"The Here and the Hereafter: Images of Paradise in Islamic Art" includes fifty-one examples of painting, calligraphy, stone carving, and architecture from Islamic cultures from Spain to Indonesia. Through Sept. 8. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—Since its founding, in 1897, by the three Hewitt sisters, whose goal was to elevate taste in America, the Cooper-Hewitt has accumulated a marvellous, if rarely displayed, library of the decorative arts. "A Design Resource" is a rotating sampler of nearly a thousand objects drawn from the collection: old tarot cards, tapestry fragments from a few millennia ago, architectural drawings, gilt furniture mounts (including a representation of a tiny pair of human feet), locks, eighteenth-century button samples, lace, chairs of every date and style, ornately beaded boxes, and Viennese tableware. The installation, while a little tricky upstairs, flows quite well, and many of the contrasts are entertaining. How can you not love an exhibition that juxtaposes a nineteenth-century birdcage in the shape of a chapel, an Egyptian funerary boat from the Middle Kingdom, and ornate copper food molds? (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge from 5 to 9; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—"Paint, Powder, and Leaf" showcases nearly a hundred decorated objects, from tin coffeepots and cannisters to wood chests and iron fire screens. Through Sept. 15. . . . ¶ A show of twenty-four quilts with floral themes, all prize-winners from this spring's Great American Quilt Festival. Through Sept. 15. . . . ¶ Forty-five narrative paintings by Harry Lieberman (1880-1983). Through Sept. 22. (Open daily, 9 to 9.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—"Africa Explores: Twentieth-Century African Art" presents more than a hundred art works in various mediums Through Aug. 18. . . . ¶ In a show called "Embodying Faith," five contemporary

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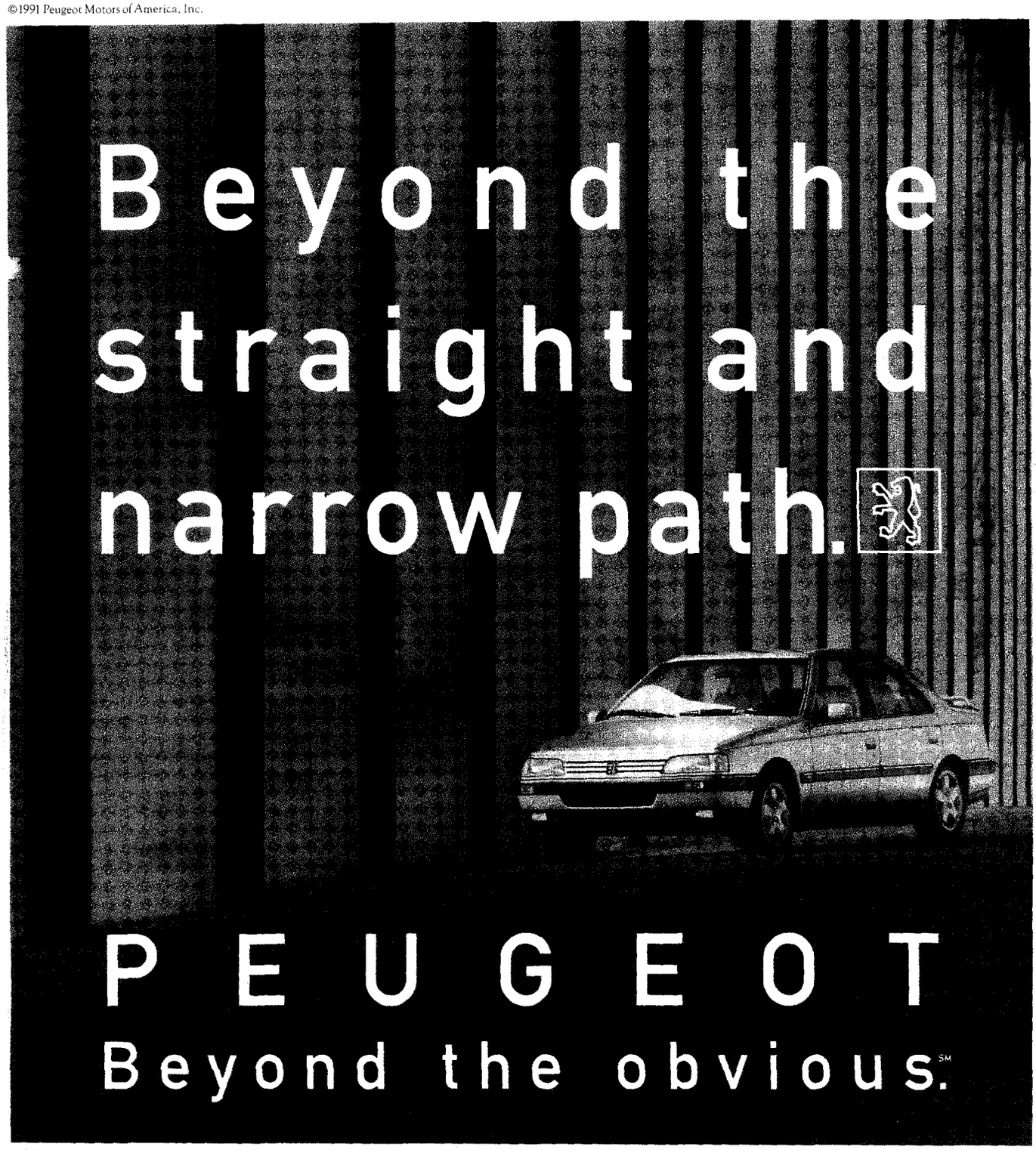

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ART–Cont'd

artists tackle the theme of the relationship between the physical and the spiritual in Christianity. Through Aug. 18. . . . ¶ The Catalan artist Perejaume has filled the window on Broadway with some old blue theatre seats, which visitors are invited to occupy, in a tired examination of viewer and viewed. Inside the museum, beside the window's entrance, is a large photograph of a grid of such seats in the desert. It is beautiful and odd, in ways the current installation isn't. Through Aug. 18. . . . ¶ "Eclipse of the Earth," an installation by Kazuo Katase. Through Aug. 18. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—A show of sixty drawings, photographs, and prints of New York structures built at the turn of the century by the architectural firm of McKim, Mead, & White. Through Sept. 1. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Kingdoms of Land, Sea, and Sky" includes a hundred and eighty zoological woodcuts, engravings, and watercolors by artists and naturalists such as Albrecht Dürer, John James Audubon, Edward Lear, and Maria Sibylla Merian. Through Aug. 24. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall. Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.). . . ¶ "Documents of Dissent," a show of books, posters, handbills, and journals from China, Tibet, the Soviet Union, the United States, and other countries. Included are the first English translation of "The Gulag Archipelago," the "Black Book of Polish Censorship," and posters by the collaborative group Guerrilla Girls. . . . ¶ A display of recently acquired rare books and manuscripts, including Joseph Conrad's manuscript for "The Secret Sharer" and Washington Irving's for "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." Through Oct. 12. (Berg Collection. Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, 32-37 Vernon Blvd., at 33rd Road, Long Island City—Noguchi (1904-88), one of the twentieth century's singular talents, designed this oasis for more than two hundred and fifty of his sculptures. It contains a wide range of his work—from the early surrealistic biomorphic sculptures to several types of stone carvings—and documentation of his prodigious public art. The centerpiece of the museum is a peaceful, ivy-walled garden dotted with the artist's works. (Open Wednesdays and Saturdays, 11 to 6.)

Queens Museum of Art, Flushing Meadow Park—"Imágenes Líricas: New Spanish Visions." An astonishingly rich and ambitious art world has sprung up in post-Franco Spain, with seven brand-new museums devoted, at least in part, to living artists; a spirited major international art fair; an impressive array of exhibitions and collections; and a network of dozens of thriving, serious art galleries. This exhibition presents eight artists who the curators believe are the most interesting to have emerged in this newly opened environment. However, the works, which do not conform to any one trend, suffer from an academic cosmopolitanism, even as they express unique qualities of Catalan, Moorish, or Spanish culture. José Maria Sicilia, the most widely noted of the batch, is a gifted painter who seeks to represent the fleeting and the abstract, but all too often his works seem programmatic. Juan Uslé is perhaps even more gifted with a brush, but his quest for self-expression, like that of the more lyrical Juan Carlos Savater, who plays Dove to Uslé's Ryder, is without issues or viewpoint. Perejaume is the most playful artist here. His neo-conceptual collages of paint and postcards play with image and abstraction, reproduction and art, in entertaining, if somewhat familiar, ways. And his postcard rack, which is filled with mirrors instead of vacation memories, examines issues of landscape, place, and representation crisply and intelligently. Through Sept. 8. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)

GALLERIES

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Mondays through Fridays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

"When Objects Dream and Talk in Their Sleep"—Since Janine Cirincione became its director, the Jack Tilton gallery has become one of the pithiest group-show venues in town. It has introduced New Yorkers to the mock-mingy joys of the new Belgian conceptualism, as practiced by artists such as Guillaume Bijl, Wim Delvoye, and Leo Copers, while also helping to settle the generational debt to the late Belgian bibliophile and bon vivant Marcel Broodthaers. Broodthaers' influence today probably rivals that of the other chess-playing Marcel—the acid Duchamp—for he seems to have left his systematically deadpan, loopy, lyrical mark on a spectrum of artists, ranging from the British filmmaker Peter Greenaway to such arch-American acerbs as Richard Prince and the neophytes Nayland Blake,

John Sloan at the Whitney Equitable Center

Jessica Diamond, and Fred Wilson. The title of this show was taken from an essay by the Surrealist Tristan Tzara, and most of the objects and installations lounging around the gallery have the poetic-prosaic, straight-from-the-attic-of-the-mind lilt that conjures Broodthaers. Karen Kilimnik's "Castle Gloom," for instance, is a scatter piece that suggests the ruins of a romance novel set in Scotland, told, seemingly, from the point of view of a latter-day, sixteen-year-old suburban Brontë, and Paula Hayes' "Cool Bride or Bruce Lee Is Dead" suggests a more explosive, though no less neurotic, form of retro-Popism. Maureen Connor's piece, however, did not make us think of Broodthaers. Her "Ensemble for Three Female Voices" consists of three "impaled" larynxes cast in red lipstick. We hear three recorded voices: one seems to murmur, while another laughs and the third weeps. It's a Duchampian mean-machine. Through Aug. 23. (24 W. 57th St.)

"Letters"—Letters have been used in literature for those poignant, vulnerable moments when a character reveals his or her deepest feelings. But in real life, letters can be used against the writer to a variety of ends, from naughty fun to outright sadism. All the works here—most of which are irreverent—incorporate letters. In a collage consisting of Connie Chung's letters and autographed photos, Jeffrey Vallance has a good time with his subject, tracing her rise from local newscaster to national celebrity through her thank-you notes and the evolution of her hairdos. In a handwritten letter that may be real or a total fabrication, Sean Landers tells a Zurich art dealer how desperately he needs money the dealer owes him from the sale of art works. The artist threatens to display the letter publicly—a threat he here carries out—until payment is made. Ernst Caramelle is represented by a monumentally sadistic but evidently fictional letter in which he provides lurid details of the sexual fun he is having with the wife and daughter of the letter's recipient. The one work that fails to raise a chuckle is the one in which privacy is indisputably violated, where fiction gives way to fact. The work is credited to Larry Clark and consists of a series of letters and photos sent to the artist over a period of five years by a former prisonmate. The writer hopes the artist will help him get back on his feet, but the letters are not answered. Instead, they wind up in an exhibition. Through Aug. 30. (Burgin, 130 Prince St. Closed Mondays.)

"Portraits on Paper"—This selection of works in several mediums is an interesting counterpoint to the portrait show that Chuck Close, who is represented here, recently assembled at the Museum of Modern Art. Unlike Close's show, in which the portraits were racked and stacked on every available surface, this one gives ample space to each work. A tilt of the head, a reticent eye, a pair of pouting lips—these are the revealing details, as seen in such works as a Samaras pastel, a Clemente watercolor, and an early Warhol photo-booth self-portrait. There are some provocative juxtapositions. At the entrance to the show is a Gilbert and George photo work of a taxi-driver flanked by the voyeuristic, somewhat predatory portrayers, who are positioned as if they were patron saints in a Flemish altarpiece; opposite this, in a neat act of symmetry, are photographic portraits of the British duo by the New York duo McDermott and McGough. Elsewhere, there is a fascinating study in frontality in the unlikely linking of Basquiat, Dubuffet, and Condo. Robert Mapplethorpe's portrait of Roy Cohn's shiny, scarred face against a black ground looks like a depiction of the Devil himself. A Cindy Sherman self-portrait, taken in 1975, when the artist was a college junior, shows her as a little girl who might well have stepped out of a Walker Evans photograph. This is social realism kissed by a subtle sarcasm, and it prefigures the tone much of her generation went on to convey. Through Aug. 16. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

BY now the strategy of appropriation has become so common that an artist's quoting from other artists' works feels like an ingredient in a postmodernist recipe rather than an act of enlightenment. When Sherrie Levine photographed a Walker Evans reproduction and framed and signed it, you could feel the shock and excitement ripple through both the art and photography worlds. But now that copying and stealing are as common in painting and photography as heavy metal once was in sculpture, the debate that formerly surrounded appropriation has gone flat.

We were fascinated to find, therefore, that John Sexton's photographs, now showing at the International Center of Photography Midtown, throw an old curve at the subject of quotation. Unlike conceptually-based artists, such as Levine, Sexton isn't copying other people's work to make a point about art. Many of his photographs here, however, are so derivative that while they aren't really copies, they feel eerily as if they were. Most of all, Sexton's work reminds us of the photography of Ansel Adams, who inspired, taught, and employed him. Adams' influence is a well-known aspect of Sexton's work, and it screams out as a subject of this exhibition. Here we see photography echoing photography, not as part of the Duchampian tradition but as a continuation of another tradition. How odd that something so obedient seems in a way, so radical, so egoless.

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PHOTOGRAPHY AT THE MET—A personal and engaging summer exhibition from the permanent collection. All five of the photographers represented work in very different ways: Andrew Bush captures someone driving in a car, isolated and deep in a private world, while René Sultra uses the metaphor of a brick wall to create a visualization of his own father's death. Larry Sultan also delves into his family (and its dynamics), with his stills of old home movies and recent portraits of his parents. Philip-Lorca diCorcia's photos are strong in their suggestion of loneliness and alienation. And from Sally Mann there are gracefully complex photographs of kids hanging around. These five visions make for a show rich in both narrative implications and textures of feeling. Through Sept. 8. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

SHORT LIST—**LEE FRIEDLANDER,** Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9, through Oct. 8); **WAYNE GEIST** and **ORAH MOORE,** Step, 66 Crosby St. (opens at 1, through Aug. 29); **NIC NICOSIA** and **BETTINA RHEIMS,** Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. (through Aug. 30); **JOHN SEXTON** and **SEBASTIÃO SALGADO,** International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. (open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8, through Sept. 1); **NINA HOWELL STARR** and **MICHAEL VON GRAFFENRIED,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway (through Aug. 23).

MUSIC

A FEW weeks ago, we suggested that the combination of marathon concert and musicological conference edited for popular consumption was an emblematic musical expression of our generation. An elaborate—indeed, we think, a spectacular—manifestation of this kind is to take place over the next two weekends at Bard College, in Annandale-on-Hudson. Honor to Bard for choosing a different composer: Mendelssohn is to be the focus of this series of twelve programs (with lectures and panel discussions interspersed), which begins on August 16. There are programs devoted to instruments of the composer's time, to his unfinished works, to his relationship with Goethe, to the music of his gifted sister Fanny (a special symposium, a major piano cycle we've never heard, plus smaller pieces), to his assimilationist religious identity, and much more. We love both Mendelssohns and find the project irresistible. Forced to choose, we would go to Program Three (old instruments; August 17), Program Five (R. Larry Todd lecturing on, and playing from, the abandoned scores; August 18); Program Seven (Mendelssohn and his friends, a fascinating group of orchestral works by Niels Gade, William Sterndale Bennett, Louis Spohr, Weber, and Mendelssohn; August 23), and, perhaps most of all, Program Eight (the Bach revival in the nineteenth century—Mendelssohn led it, and the program offers Bach imitations, homages, and arrangements; August 24). But we envy those with the time to swallow the series whole. There is even a hefty collection of essays—new or newly translated, edited by Mr. Todd—to go along with the event (Princeton University Press is the publisher). Leon Botstein, the president of Bard and a sometime orchestral conductor, is doing something really worthwhile here.

IN TOWN

MOSTLY MOZART FESTIVAL—Aug. 12: The Takács String Quartet, assisted by flutist Eugenia Zukerman and pianist Garrick Ohlsson, performs works by Mozart and Dvořák. . . . **NOTE:** In a pre-concert recital, beginning at 7 and open to ticket-holders, Mr. Ohlsson performs Haydn's Piano Sonata No. 52, in E-Flat, and, with Ms. Zukerman, Mozart's Sonata, K. 376. . . . ¶ Aug. 13-14: André Previn conducts the Festival Orchestra in Mozart's "Serenata Notturna" and Haydn's Symphony No. 102; the conductor doubles as the soloist in Mozart's C-Minor Piano Concerto. . . . ¶ Aug. 15: Violinist Pinchas Zukerman and pianist Marc Neikrug perform four Mozart sonatas, as well as his Variations, K. 359, on "La Bergère Célimène," an anonymous French chanson. . . . ¶ Aug. 16-17: Soprano Kathleen Battle is the soloist in two Mozart arias—"L'amerò, sarò costante," from "Il Rè Pastore," and the concert aria "Misera, dove son"—as well as in his celebrated motet "Exsultate, jubilate." André Previn also conducts the Festival Orchestra in the composer's Divertimento, K. 251, and the "Prague" Symphony. . . . ¶ Aug. 19: The Beaux Arts Trio interprets trios by Mozart, Beethoven, and Dvořák. . . . **NOTE:** In a pre-concert recital, beginning at 7 and open to ticket-holders, the ensemble offers works by Hummel and Beethoven (his "Kakadu" Variations). . . . ¶ Aug. 20-21: Gerard Schwarz conducts the Festival Orchestra and Chorus in Mozart's "Great" C-Minor Mass (with soprano Dawn Kotoski, mezzo-soprano Jane Bunnell, tenor Gran Wilson, and baritone Jake Gardner). The program also includes excerpts from "Le Nozze di Figaro" (including two arias sung by Ms. Bunnell), and the Concerto in E-Flat Major, K. 449 (with Cecile Licad as the soloist). (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Evenings at 8. Through Aug. 24.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA—**CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA** and **PAGLIACCI,** in a new production of the double bill that transposes the action of both operas to New York's Little Italy. With Sharon Graham, Melanie Sonnenberg, and Stephen O'Mara (in the former); and Gwynne Geyer, John Absalom, and Sigmund Cowan (in the latter). Richard Bradshaw conducting both. (Aug. 13 at 8 and Aug. 17 at 2.). . . **LA BOHÈME,** with Michèle Boucher, Lauren Flanigan, Robert Brubaker, and Carlos Serrano; Joseph Colaneri. (Aug. 14 and Aug. 17 at 8.). . . **TURANDOT,** with Rebecca Copley, Christiane Riel, Antonio Barasorda, and Harry Dworchak; Guido Ajmone-Marsan. (Aug. 15 at 8.). . . **LA TRAVIATA,** in a new production, in which the heroine is cast as a consumptive, cosmopolitan call girl commuting between New York and Paris; with Sheryl Woods, Martin Thompson, and Gaetan La Perrière; conducted by Guido Ajmone-Marsan. (Aug. 16 at 8.). . . **THE CUNNING LITTLE VIXEN,** the first performance of a revival (in English) of Janáček's bittersweet operatic fable, based on a Czech comic strip; with Kathryn Gamberoni, Cynthia Rose, Jan Opalach, and John Lankston; Christopher Keene (Aug. 20 at 8.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

ROYALE TRIO—Performing works for flute, cello, and piano by Clementi, Martinů, and Gabriel Pierné, among others. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. Aug. 14 at 5:45.)

BARGEMUSIC—Three classics of Germanic chamber music—Beethoven's Clarinet Trio (Op. 11), Brahms' Second Clarinet Sonata, and Mendelssohn's C-Minor Piano Trio—are performed here by clarinettist David Shifrin, violinist Christiaan Bor, cellist Jian Wang, and pianist Joseph Villa. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Aug. 15-16 at 7:30 and Aug. 18 at 4.)

SATIE'S "USPUD"—It's sort of a ballet (the composer called it a "ballet chrétien") and it's sort of an opera (the press materials identify it as a "Rosicrucian redemption opera"). Whatever it is, the three-act, one-character piece (which is almost never performed) will likely prove as bizarre and irreverent as the history that surrounds it. When it was new, at the end of 1892, Erik Satie and his librettist, J. P. Contamine de Latour, unsuccessfully pitched the work to the head of the Paris Opéra, gaining a personal interview only after one of them challenged him to a duel—an encounter *monsieur le directeur* could not honorably refuse. The meeting led to neither violence nor a performance; but it did enable Satie and Contamine de Latour to print on the work's cover (with chutzpah,

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MUSIC–Cont'd

if a certain literal truth) that "Uspud" had been "presented at the Théâtre National de l'Opéra on December 20th, 1892." Paul Zukofsky directs an ensemble of Juilliard students in the program, which also includes several of the composer's piano works. (Museum of Modern Art Sculpture Garden, at 14 W. 54th St. Aug. 16-17 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

Goldman Memorial Band—Keith Brion conducts an all-American program that ranges from an arrangement of James Hewitt's eighteenth-century descriptive sonata "The Battle of Trenton" (which the composer dedicated to George Washington) to operetta arias by John Philip Sousa (sung by soprano Kimberly Parson). (Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center. Aug. 16 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Bronx Arts Ensemble—Edward Brewer directs an early-instrument group in works of Handel, Telemann, and Alessandro Scarlatti (his cantata "Su le Sponde del Tebro," with soprano Margaret Astrup and trumpeter Lorraine Cohen). (Rockwood Drive Circle, Van Cortlandt Park, the Bronx. Aug. 18 at 2.... ¶ McGinley Student Center, Fordham University, Bronx Rose Hill Campus at Southern Blvd. Aug. 18 at 4. No tickets necessary for either performance. For directions and rain-date information, call 549-1899.)

New York City Gay Men's Chorus—Gary Miller directs a preview of the group's upcoming European tour program, including music by Copland, Bernstein, Sondheim, Gershwin, Cole Porter, and Libby Larsen. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Aug. 20 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

OUT OF TOWN

Tanglewood—Aug. 14 at 8: The Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra, a Boston University student orchestra, and musicians from the Boston Symphony are conducted alternately by Seiji Ozawa, Charles Dutoit, Leon Fleisher, and David Hoose in a benefit concert that culminates in Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture" and accompanying pyrotechnics.... ¶ Aug. 15 at 8:30: Yo-Yo Ma, assisted by pianist Gilbert Kalish and violinist Ronan Lefkowitz, performs music by Ives, Copland, Bernstein, and Tod Machover.... ¶ Aug. 16 at 9: Seiji Ozawa conducts the Boston Symphony in Bernstein's Second Symphony ("The Age of Anxiety," with pianist Benjamin Pasternack) and Berlioz' "Symphonie Fantastique."... ¶ Aug. 17 at 8:30: Marek Janowski conducts the Boston Symphony in Franz von Suppé's "Pique Dame" Overture, Dvořák's Eighth Symphony, and Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto (with Midori).... ¶ Aug. 18 at 2:30: Seiji Ozawa conducts the Boston Symphony in Rossini's "Semiramide" Overture, Bartók's "Concerto for Orchestra," and Mozart's G-Major Piano Concerto, K. 453 (with Peter Serkin). (Lenox, Mass. For information about tickets, call 1-413 637-1940. Through Aug. 25.)

Hampton SummerFest—Aug. 16 at 8:30: Robert Kapilow conducts the Festival Orchestra in an all-Mozart program: the Divertimento for Strings, K. 136, the Serenade, K. 525 ("Eine Kleine Nachtmusik"), and the A-Major Piano Concerto, K. 414, featuring Ilana Vered (who also joins violinist Juliette Kang in presenting the Violin Sonata, K. 378). (Long Island University Southampton Campus, 239 Montauk Highway, Southampton. For information, call 1-212 772-0450.)... ¶ Aug. 17 at 8:30: Songs by Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, Marc Blitztein, and William Bolcom—as well as Bernstein's "Arias and Barcarolles"—are performed by four members of the New York Festival of Song: soprano Katherine Buffaloe, baritone Jon Brandstetter, and pianists Michael Barrett and Steven Blier. (Jewish Center of the Hamptons, 44 Woods Lane, East Hampton. 1-516 324-9858.)

Bard Music Festival—A symposium, presented over two consecutive weekends, on Felix Mendelssohn and his world, and including numerous concerts. (Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson. Aug. 16-18. For information about tickets and specific events, call 1-914 758-2869. Through Aug. 25.)

JAZZ/POP/ROCK
PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Jimmy Buffett—This Key West poet of the Hawaiian-shirt set (his big hit was "Margaritaville") plays children's music for adults: he's like a Raffi for ex-hippies. His annual summertime concerts are ritualized, audience-participation events along the lines of a Grateful Dead show or a midnight screening of "The Rocky Horror Picture Show." It's a mindless, therapeutic good time, and the obligatory tailgate party and parking-lot barbecue before the show is half the fun. (Jones Beach Theatre. 1-516 221-1000. Aug. 14 at 8.)

Felix Mendelssohn, celebrated at the Bard Music Festival

Paul Simon—Forget the freshmen-poetry lyrics from the sixties, forget the nebbish of the seventies, forget the recent schmalzy weeping with Ed Bradley on "60 Minutes." Why deny the obvious? Paul Simon has been writing great material for three decades, and with "Graceland" and "The Rhythm of the Saints" he has tapped instrumental sources that let him transcend himself. In case you haven't heard it live, the multiracial, multinational, seventeen-member Born at the Right Time band makes a joyful noise you won't believe. The promoters are making donations to the Parks Department and to the Children's Health Fund, and the contribution this splendid evening will make to the morale of New Yorkers couldn't come at a better time. Don't watch it on HBO—be there. (Central Park's Great Lawn. Aug. 15 at 7. No tickets necessary.)

David Sanborn—Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Aug. 12-13 at 8.

Third World, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, and **Arrow**—Apollo Theatre, 253 W. 125th St. 864-0372. Aug. 13 at 7 and 11.

Lollapalooza Festival—Jane's Addiction, Living Colour, Nine Inch Nails, Butthole Surfers, Siouxie and the Banshees, Ice-T, and the Rollins Band. (Waterloo Village, Stanhope, N.J. 1-201 347-4700. Aug. 14 at 2.)

3rd Bass—Beacon Theatre. Aug. 16 at 8.

Angela Bofill—Two Musicruise concerts on a Circle Line boat. (Pier 81, Twelfth Ave. at 41st St. 941-1234. Aug. 16 at 8 and 10:30; boarding starts at 7:30 and 10.)

Jimmy Buffett

Robert Cray Band—With Los Lobos. (Beacon Theatre. Aug. 17 at 8.)

James Newton–David Murray Quintet—Brooklyn Museum, Sculpture Garden, Eastern Parkway. Aug. 18 at 3. Tickets at the museum on the day of the concert.

Dizzy Gillespie and **Miriam Makeba**—World Financial Center Plaza, Battery Park City. Aug. 18 at 4. No tickets necessary.

Jones Beach Theatre—Aug. 17 at 7:30: Miles Davis, Regina Belle, Wynton Marsalis, Take 6, Bobby Watson, and Victor Lewis.... ¶ Aug. 18 at 7:30: B. B. King, Robert Cray, John Lee Hooker, and Etta James.... ¶ Aug. 21 at 8: Bad Company, with Damn Yankees. (1-516 221-1000.)

Riverside Park Arts Festival—Aug. 17: The Bob Mintzer big band.... ¶ Aug. 18: The Lew Soloff septet. (Rotunda, W. 79th St., near the Boat Basin. Performances at 4 and 6. No tickets necessary.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Mets—Vs. the St. Louis Cardinals, Aug. 20-22 at 7:40.

Yankees—Vs. the Kansas City Royals, Aug. 13-14 at 7:30 and Aug. 15 at 1.... ¶ Vs. the Chicago White Sox, Aug. 16-17 at 7:30 and Aug. 18 at 1:30.
(The Mets play at Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499, and the Yankees play at Yankee Stadium, 293-6000.)

RACING

Horses—At Saratoga Springs: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1. The Travers is Aug. 17, and the John A. Morris Handicap is Aug. 18. Through Aug. 26.... At Monmouth Park, Oceanport, N.J.: Weekdays, except Mondays and Thursdays, at 1:05. Through Sept. 2.... At Atlantic City Race Course: Wednesdays through Saturdays at 7:15. Through Aug. 31.... **trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Mondays through Saturdays at 8, Tuesdays at 1, and Sundays at 6.... At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30. Through Aug. 19.... At Saratoga Raceway, Saratoga Springs: Wednesdays through Saturdays at 7:45.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Lincoln Center Out-of-Doors—Free performances in the environs of Lincoln Center. Aug. 13 at 8:15: Laura Dean Dancers and Musicians.... ¶ Aug. 14 at 5:30: Tap dancing by Hotfoot.... At 8:15: Laura Dean Dancers and Musicians.... ¶ Aug. 15 at 5:30: Dances by Frank Conversano, Dyane Harvey-Salaam, and Cathy Ward.... ¶ Aug. 16 at 5:30: Jane Comfort and Jane Goldberg perform new dance works.... At 6:30: Duo-pianists Edmund Niemann and Nurit Tilles.... At 8:15: The Goldman Memorial Band.... ¶ Aug. 17 at 4: A rockabilly jamboree.... ¶ Aug. 18 at 2:30: La Troupe Makandal, Haitian dance and music.... At 5:30: Tiyé Giraud, DeWarren Moses, and Marlies Yearby.... At 8:15: Willie Colón, with Legal Alien.... ¶ Aug. 20 at 5:30: Victoria Marks and company in a new dance piece.... At 6:30: Chamber music by Garrufio, from Venezuela.... At 8:15: Dance by the Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble.... ¶ Aug. 21 at 5:30: Dances by young choreographers Ron Brown, Amie Malale, and Kevin Magee.... At 8:15: The Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble. (Through Aug. 26. For rain-date information, call 875-5400.)

Veggies, Flowers, and Plants—The City Gardeners' Harvest Fair is based on the county-fair model, only the produce has been grown on fire escapes and rooftops, and in community gardens. Bluegrass-band and banjo contests fills out the picture. (Floyd Bennett Field, Brooklyn. Aug. 17, from 11 to 6. For information and directions, call 233-2926.)

Walks—Aug. 17 at 3: A tour of NoHo... ¶ Aug. 18 at 2: A tour of Carnegie Hill (Both sponsored by Adventure on a Shoestring. For reservations, call 265-2663.)

A Reading—Joyce Carol Oates reads from her new collection, "Heat & Other Stories." (Endicott Booksellers, 450 Columbus Ave., at 81st St. Aug. 21 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

EAST SIDE

ANGELIKA FILM CENTER, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Slacker" (directed by Richard Linklater).
Theatre 2: "Regarding Henry" (†).
Theatre 3: "La Femme Nikita" (Luc Besson; in French), with Anne Parillaud, Jean-Hugues Anglade, Tcheky Karyo, and Jeanne Moreau.
Theatre 4: "The Dark Backward" (Adam Rifkin), with Judd Nelson, Bill Paxton, Wayne Newton, and Lara Flynn Boyle.
Theatre 5: "An Angel at My Table" (†).
Theatre 6: "Trust" (†).

PUBLIC THEATRE, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Aug. 12: Theatre closed.
Aug. 13-14: "Swing Time" (1936, George Stevens), with Ginger Rogers, Fred Astaire, Helen Broderick, Victor Moore, and Betty Furness; and "Shall We Dance" (1937, Mark Sandrich), with Rogers, Astaire, Edward Everett Horton, Jerome Cowan, and Eric Blore.
Aug. 15: "Moon Over Miami" (1941, Walter Lang), with Betty Grable, Don Ameche, and Robert Cummings; and "That Night in Rio" (1941, Irving Cummings), with Alice Faye, Ameche, and Carmen Miranda.
Aug. 16-18: "Gold Diggers of 1933" (†); and "Gold Diggers of 1935" (1935, Busby Berkeley), with Alice Brady, Hugh Herbert, Dick Powell, and Gloria Stuart.
Aug. 19: Theatre closed.
Aug. 20-21: "Broadway Melody of 1936" (†); and "Broadway Melody of 1940" (1940, Norman Taurog), with Eleanor Powell, Fred Astaire, and George Murphy.

MOVIELAND 8TH STREET TRIPLEX, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: Through Aug. 20: "The Naked Gun 2½: The Smell of Fear" (†). From Aug. 21: "Barton Fink" (Joel Coen), with John Turturro and John Goodman.
Theatre 2: "Terminator 2: Judgment Day" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Aug. 20: "Bingo!" (Matthew Robbins). From Aug. 21: "Barton Fink."

LOEWS VILLAGE THEATRE VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "Thelma & Louise" (Ridley Scott), with Susan Sarandon and Geena Davis.
Theatre 2: "Life Stinks" (†).
Theatre 3: "Boyz N the Hood" (†).
Theatre 4: "Body Parts" (Eric Red), with Jeff Fahey.
Theatre 5: "Delirious" (Tom Mankiewicz), with John Candy.
Theatre 6: Through Aug. 13: "Boyz N the Hood" (†). Aug. 14-15: Theatre closed. From Aug. 16: "Mystery Date" (Jonathan Wacks), with Ethan Hawke, Teri Polo, and Brian McNamara.
Theatre 7: "Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey" (†).

CINEMA VILLAGE 12TH STREET, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
"Eating" (Henry Jaglom).

VILLAGE EAST CINEMAS, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "The Miracle" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Doctor" (†).
Theatre 3: (Matinées only) "101 Dalmatians" (†); and (evenings only) "Ju Dou" (Zhang Yimou; in Mandarin).
Theatre 4: "Doc Hollywood" (Michael Caton-Jones), with Michael J. Fox.
Theatre 5: "V. I. Warshawski" (Jeff Kanew), with Kathleen Turner.
Theatre 6: "Crossing the Line" (David Leland), with Liam Neeson and Joanne Whalley-Kilmer.
Theatre 7: "Straight Out of Brooklyn" (Matty Rich).

CINEMA VILLAGE 3RD AVENUE, between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)
"Voyeur" (Alex van Warmerdam).

LOEWS 19TH STREET EAST 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Regarding Henry" (†).
Theatre 2: "Regarding Henry" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Naked Gun 2½: The Smell of Fear" (†).
Theatre 4: "Terminator 2: Judgment Day" (†).
Theatre 5: "Terminator 2: Judgment Day" (†).
Theatre 6: Through Aug. 15: "Bingo!" (Matthew Robbins). From Aug. 16: "Mystery Date" (Jonathan Wacks), with Ethan Hawke, Teri Polo, and Brian McNamara.

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 15.

GRAMERCY, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"The Doctor" (†).

BAY CINEMA, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Pure Luck" (Nadia Tass), with Martin Short and Danny Glover.

MURRAY HILL CINEMAS, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: (Matinées only) "101 Dalmatians" (†); and (evenings only) "Thelma & Louise" (Ridley Scott), with Susan Sarandon and Geena Davis.
Theatre 2: "V. I. Warshawski" (Jeff Kanew), with Kathleen Turner.
Theatre 3: "Doc Hollywood" (Michael Caton-Jones), with Michael J. Fox.
Theatre 4: "Boyz N the Hood" (†).

LOEWS 34TH STREET SHOWPLACE, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: Through Aug. 15: "Delirious" (Tom Mankiewicz), with John Candy. From Aug. 16: "Mystery Date" (Jonathan Wacks), with Ethan Hawke, Teri Polo, and Brian McNamara.
Theatre 2: "Life Stinks" (†).
Theatre 3: "Regarding Henry" (†).

34TH ST. EAST, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Hot Shots!" (Jim Abrahams), with Charlie Sheen, Cary Elwes, Valeria Golino, and Jon Cryer.

EASTSIDE CINEMA, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"La Femme Nikita" (Luc Besson; in French), with Anne Parillaud, Jean-Hugues Anglade, Tcheky Karyo, and Jeanne Moreau.

SUTTON 1 AND 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: (Matinées only) "101 Dalmatians" (†); and (evenings only) "V. I. Warshawski" (Jeff Kanew), with Kathleen Turner.
Theatre 2: "Doc Hollywood" (Michael Caton-Jones), with Michael J. Fox.

GOTHAM CINEMA, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Hot Shots!" (Jim Abrahams), with Charlie Sheen, Cary Elwes, Valeria Golino, and Jon Cryer.

PLAZA, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Thelma & Louise" (Ridley Scott), with Susan Sarandon and Geena Davis.

MANHATTAN TWIN, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Double Impact" (Sheldon Lettich), with Jean-Claude Van Damme.
Theatre 2: "Double Impact."

59TH STREET EAST CINEMA, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Body Parts" (Eric Red), with Jeff Fahey.

BARONET AND CORONET, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Mobsters" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 20: "Pure Luck" (Nadia Tass), with Martin Short and Danny Glover. From Aug. 21: "Barton Fink" (Joel Coen), with John Turturro and John Goodman.

CINEMA I, CINEMA II, AND CINEMA 3RD AVENUE, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "The Doctor" (†).
Theatre 2: "Boyz N the Hood" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Miracle" (†).

GEMINI 1 AND 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Bingo!" (Matthew Robbins).
Theatre 2: "Terminator 2: Judgment Day" (†).

BEEKMAN, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
Through Aug. 13: "City Slickers" (†). From Aug. 14: "The Commitments" (Alan Parker).

LOEWS NEW YORK TWIN, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Life Stinks" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 15: "Delirious" (Tom Mankiewicz), with John Candy. From Aug. 16: "Mystery Date" (Jonathan Wacks), with Ethan Hawke, Teri Polo, and Brian McNamara.

68TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Thelma & Louise" (Ridley Scott), with Susan Sarandon and Geena Davis.

LOEWS TOWER EAST, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Regarding Henry" (†).

U. A. EAST, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Delirious" (Tom Mankiewicz), with John Candy.

PARK & 86TH STREET CINEMAS, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Double Impact" (Sheldon Lettich), with Jean-Claude Van Damme.
Theatre 2: "Hot Shots!" (Jim Abrahams), with Charlie Sheen, Cary Elwes, and Jon Cryer.

86TH STREET EAST TWIN, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Doc Hollywood" (Michael Caton-Jones), with Michael J. Fox.
Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "101 Dalmatians" (†); and (evenings only) "V. I. Warshawski" (Jeff Kanew), with Kathleen Turner.

WEST SIDE

FILM FORUM, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: Through Aug. 20: "In the Shadow of the Stars" (directed by Irving Saraf and Allie Light). From Aug. 21: "The Yen Family" (1988, Yojiri Takita; in Japanese).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: Through Aug. 13: "The Famine Within" (Katherine Gilday), a documentary. From Aug. 14: "House of Wax" (1953, André de Toth), with Phyllis Kirk, Vincent Price, Frank Lovejoy, and Carolyn Jones.

BLEECKER MOVIE HOUSE, 144 Bleecker St. (807-9205)
Theatre 1: "Tatie Danielle" (Etienne Chatiliez; in French), with Tsilla Chelton.
Theatre 2: (Separate admissions) "Archangel" (Guy Maddin); and "Poison" (Todd Haynes).

WAVERLY 1 AND 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Mobsters" (†).
Theatre 2: "Double Impact" (Sheldon Lettich), with Jean-Claude Van Damme.

8TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
Through Aug. 15: "Truth or Dare" (Alek Keshishian), with Madonna.
From Aug. 16: "Mystery Date" (Jonathan Wacks), with Ethan Hawke, Teri Polo, and Brian McNamara.

ART GREENWICH TWIN, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Hot Shots!" (Jim Abrahams), with Charlie Sheen, Cary Elwes, Valeria Golino, and Jon Cryer.
Theatre 2: "Pure Luck" (Nadia Tass), with Martin Short and Danny Glover.

QUAD CINEMA, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Truly, Madly, Deeply" (Anthony Minghella), with Juliet Stevenson, Alan Rickman, Bill Paterson, and Michael Maloney.
Theatre 2: "Blowback."
Theatre 3: "My Father's Glory" (Yves Robert, in French), with Julien Ciamaca.
Theatre 4: "A Paper Wedding" (Michel Brault, in French), with Geneviève Bujold.

CHELSEA CINEMAS, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "City Slickers" (†).
Theatre 2: "Hot Shots!" (Jim Abrahams), with Charlie Sheen, Cary Elwes, Valeria Golino, and Jon Cryer.
Theatre 3: Through Aug. 13: "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves" (Kevin Reynolds), with Kevin Costner. From Aug. 14: "The Commitments" (Alan Parker).
Theatre 4: "Mobsters" (†).
Theatre 5: "Boyz N the Hood" (†).
Theatre 6: Through Aug. 13: "Point Break" (†). From Aug. 14: "The Commitments."
Theatre 7: "Doc Hollywood" (Michael Caton-Jones), with Michael J. Fox.
Theatre 8: "Pure Luck" (Nadia Tass), with Martin Short and Danny Glover.
Theatre 9: "Double Impact" (Sheldon Lettich), with Jean-Claude Van Damme.

23RD ST. WEST TRIPLEX, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: (Matinées only) "101 Dalmatians" (†); and (evenings only) "V. I. Warshawski" (Jeff Kanew), with Kathleen Turner.
Theatre 2: (Separate admissions) "Jungle Fever" (Spike Lee), with Wesley Snipes and Annabella Sciorra; and "Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey" (†).
Theatre 3: "Body Parts" (Eric Red), with Jeff Fahey.

GUILD, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Regarding Henry" (†).

WORLDWIDE CINEMAS, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)

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MOVIE HOUSES–Cont'd

Theatre 1: "Truth or Dare" (Alek Keshishian), with Madonna.
Theatre 2: "Mobsters" (†).
Theatre 3: "City Slickers" (†).
Theatre 4: "Regarding Henry" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Naked Gun 2½: The Smell of Fear" (†).
Theatre 6: "Thelma & Louise" (Ridley Scott), with Susan Sarandon and Geena Davis.

ZIEGFELD, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Pure Luck" (Nadia Tass), with Martin Short and Danny Glover.

LOEWS FESTIVAL, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"The Naked Gun 2½: The Smell of Fear" (†).

57TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Crossing the Line" (David Leland), with Liam Neeson and Joanne Whalley-Kilmer.

CARNEGIE HALL CINEMAS, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Trust" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 20: "Tatie Danielle" (Etienne Chatiliez; in French), with Tsilla Chelton. From Aug. 21: "Barton Fink" (Joel Coen), with John Turturro and John Goodman.

LOEWS FINE ARTS, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"My Mother's Castle" (Yves Robert, in French), with Julien Ciamaca.

CINEMA 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves" (Kevin Reynolds), with Kevin Costner.

LOEWS PARAMOUNT, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"The Doctor" (†).

62ND & BROADWAY, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
Through Aug. 13: "Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey" (†).
From Aug. 14: "The Commitments" (Alan Parker).

LINCOLN PLAZA 1, 2, AND 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Everybody's Fine" (Giuseppe Tornatore, in Italian), with Marcello Mastroianni.
Theatre 2: "Europa Europa" (†).
Theatre 3: "Paris Is Burning" (Jennie Livingston), a documentary.

REGENCY, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Hot Shots!" (Jim Abrahams), with Charlie Sheen, Cary Elwes, Valeria Golino, and Jon Cryer.

LOEWS 84TH STREET SIXPLEX, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Life Stinks" (†).
Theatre 2: "Body Parts" (Eric Red), with Jeff Fahey.
Theatre 3: "Regarding Henry" (†).
Theatre 4: "Doc Hollywood" (Michael Caton-Jones), with Michael J. Fox.
Theatre 5: "Terminator 2: Judgment Day" (†).
Theatre 6: Through Aug. 15: "Delirious" (Tom Mankiewicz), with John Candy. From Aug. 16: "Mystery Date" (Jonathan Wacks), with Ethan Hawke, Teri Polo, and Brian McNamara.

METRO CINEMA 1 AND 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: (Matinées only) "101 Dalmatians" (†); and (evenings only) "Mobsters" (†).
Theatre 2: "Pure Luck" (Nadia Tass), with Martin Short and Danny Glover.

OLYMPIA I AND II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Boyz N the Hood" (†).
Theatre 2: "Double Impact" (Sheldon Lettich), with Jean-Claude Van Damme.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

CRITERION CENTER, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves" (directed by Kevin Reynolds), with Kevin Costner.
Theatre 2: "Terminator 2: Judgment Day" (†).
Theatre 3: "Another You" (Maurice Phillips), with Gene Wilder and Richard Pryor.
Theatre 4: "Point Break" (†).
Theatre 5: "Hot Shots!" (Jim Abrahams), with Charlie Sheen, Cary Elwes, Valeria Golino, and Jon Cryer.
Theatre 6: "Bingo!" (Matthew Robbins).

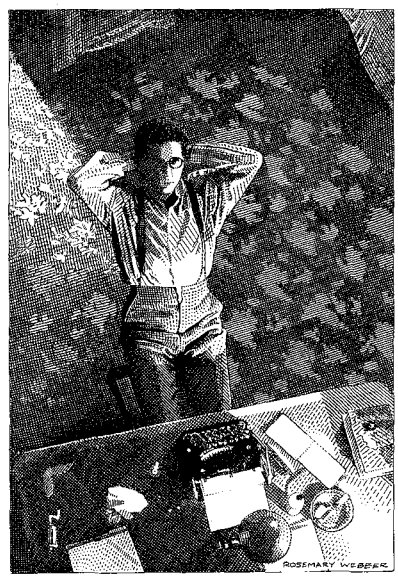
EMBASSY 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
Through Aug. 15: "V. I. Warshawski" (Jeff Kanew), with Kathleen Turner.
From Aug. 16: "Mystery Date" (Jonathan Wacks), with Ethan Hawke, Teri Polo, and Brian McNamara.

EMBASSY 2, 3, AND 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "Body Parts" (Eric Red), with Jeff Fahey.
Theatre 2: "Delirious" (Tom Mankiewicz), with John Candy.
Theatre 3: Through Aug. 15: "Life Stinks" (†). From Aug. 16: "V. I. Warshawski" (Jeff Kanew), with Kathleen Turner.

LOEWS ASTOR PLAZA, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Boyz N the Hood" (†).

NATIONAL TWIN, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Mobsters" (†).
Theatre 2: "Double Impact" (Sheldon Lettich), with Jean-Claude Van Damme.

WEST SIDE CINEMA 1 AND 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)
Theatre 1: "Straight Out of Brooklyn" (Matty Rich).
Theatre 2: "Doc Hollywood" (Michael Caton-Jones), with Michael J. Fox.



John Turturro in "Barton Fink"

REVIVAL HOUSES

BIOGRAPH CINEMA, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)
Aug. 12: "The Private Life of Henry VIII" (1933, directed by Alexander Korda), with Charles Laughton, Merle Oberon, Binnie Barnes, Wendy Barrie, Elsa Lanchester, Robert Donat, and John Loder; and "Young Bess" (1953, George Sidney), with Jean Simmons, Stewart Granger, Deborah Kerr, and Charles Laughton.
Aug. 13-14: "My Friend Flicka" (1943, Harold Schuster) and "Thunderhead—Son of Flicka" (1945, Louis King), both with Roddy McDowall, Preston Foster, and Rita Johnson.
Aug. 15-17: "The 400 Blows" (1959, François Truffaut; in French), with Jean-Pierre Léaud; and "Stolen Kisses" (†).
Aug. 18-19: "The Desert Fox" (1951, Henry Hathaway), with James Mason, Jessica Tandy, Cedric Hardwicke, and Luther Adler; and "The Desert Rats" (1953, Robert Wise), with Mason, Richard Burton, Robert Newton, and Chips Rafferty.
Aug. 20-21: "The Last Picture Show" (1971, Peter Bogdanovich), with Timothy Bottoms, Jeff Bridges, Cybill Shepherd, Ben Johnson, and Cloris Leachman; and "Texasville" (1990, Bogdanovich), with Bridges, Shepherd, Bottoms, Annie Potts, and Leachman.

FILM FORUM 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Through Aug. 13: "House of Wax" (1953, André de Toth), with Phyllis Kirk, Vincent Price, Frank Lovejoy, and Carolyn Jones.
Aug. 14: "Cobra Woman" (1944, Robert Siodmak), with Jon Hall, Maria Montez, and Sabu; and "Dr. Cyclops" (1940, Ernest B. Schoedsack), with Albert Dekker.
Aug. 15: "Blithe Spirit" (1945, David Lean), with Constance Cummings, Rex Harrison, Kay Hammond, and Margaret Rutherford; and "Portrait of Jennie" (1949, William Dieterle), with Jennifer Jones, Joseph Cotten, and Ethel Barrymore.
Aug. 16-17: "The Old Dark House" (1932, James Whale), with Charles Laughton, Melvyn Douglas, Raymond Massey, Boris Karloff, and Gloria Stuart; and "She" (†).
Aug. 18: "Beauty and the Beast" (1946, Jean Cocteau; in French), with Jean Marais, Josette Day, Marcel André, and Michel Auclair; and "Miracle in Milan" (1951, Vittorio De Sica; in Italian), with Francesco Golissano, Brunella Bovo, Paolo Stoppa, and Emma Gramatica.
Aug. 19-20: "The Little Shop of Horrors" (†); "A Bucket of Blood" (1959, Roger Corman), with Dick Miller; and "Not of This Earth" (1957, Corman), with Paul Birch and Beverly Garland.
Aug. 21: "X—the Unknown" (1957, Leslie Norman), with Dean Jagger, Edward Chapman, and Leo McKern; and "Horror Hotel" (1960, John Moxey), with Dennis Lotis, Christopher Lee, and Betta St. John.

THEATRE 80 ST. MARKS, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
Aug. 12: "Bob le Flambeur" (1955, Jean-Pierre Melville; in French), with Isabel Corey and Roger Duchesne; and "My Life to Live" (1962, Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Anna Karina.
Aug. 13: "Ministry of Fear" (1944, Fritz Lang), with Ray Milland, Marjorie Reynolds, and Dan Duryea; and "The Fallen Idol" (1948, Carol Reed), with Bobby Henrey, Ralph Richardson, and Michèle Morgan.
Aug. 14: "Goldfinger" (1964, Guy Hamilton), with Sean Connery, Honor Blackman, and Gert Frobe; and "From Russia with Love" (1963, Terence Young), with Connery, Robert Shaw, and Lotte Lenya.
Aug. 15: "Persona" (1967, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Bibi Andersson and Liv Ullmann; and "The Seventh Seal" (1956, Bergman; in Swedish), with Max von Sydow, Gunnar Björnstrand, Andersson, and Nils Poppe.
Aug. 16-17: "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" (†); and "Taking Off" (1971, Miloš Forman), with Lynn Carlin and Buck Henry.
Aug. 18: "Walkabout" (1971, Nicolas Roeg); and "Picnic at Hanging Rock" (1975, Peter Weir), with Rachel Roberts and Dominic Guard.
Aug. 19: "King of Hearts" (1967, Philippe de Broca; in French and English), with Alan Bates and Geneviève Bujold; and "The Mad Adventures of 'Rabbi' Jacob" (1973, Gérard Oury; in French), with Louis de Funès.
Aug. 20: "Blonde Venus" (†); and "Shanghai Express" (1932, Josef von Sternberg), with Marlene Dietrich, Clive Brook, Warner Oland, and Anna May Wong.
Aug. 21: "Fahrenheit 451" (1966, François Truffaut), with Julie Christie and Oskar Werner; and "Silent Running" (1972, Douglas Trumbill), with Bruce Dern.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—Aug. 12 at 2:30: "Finders Keepers" (1984, directed by Richard Lester), with Michael O'Keefe, Beverly D'Angelo, and Louis Gossett, Jr. . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 6: "Silver Streak" (1976, Arthur Hiller), with Gene Wilder, Jill Clayburgh, and Richard Pryor. . . . ¶ Aug. 13 at 2:30: "Twentieth Century" (1934, Howard Hawks), with John Barrymore, Carole Lombard, and Walter Connolly. . . . ¶ Aug. 13 at 6: "Housekeeping" (1987, Bill Forsyth), with Christine Lahti. . . . ¶ Aug. 15 at 2:30: "Brief Encounter" (1946, David Lean), with Celia Johnson and Trevor Howard. . . . ¶ Aug. 15 at 6 and Aug. 17 at 1: "Other Men's Women" (1931, William Wellman), with Mary Astor, Joan Blondell, and James Cagney; and "Silk Express" (1933, Ray Enright), with Neil Hamilton. . . . ¶ Aug. 16 at 2:30 and Aug. 17 at 5: "Diamonds of the Night" (1964, Jan Nemec; in Czech, with no English subtitles) and "Closely Watched Trains" (1966, Jiri Menzel; in Czech). . . . ¶ Aug. 16 at 6: "Battle of the Rails" (1946, René Clément; in French). . . . ¶ Aug. 18 at 2 and Aug. 19 at 6: "The Grey Fox" (1982, Phillip Borsos), with Richard Farnsworth. . . . ¶ Aug. 18 at 5 and Aug. 19 at 2:30: "Mystery Train" (1989, Jim Jarmusch). . . . ¶ Aug. 20 at 2:30 and 6: A new Soviet film, to be announced.

MUSEUM OF TELEVISION AND RADIO, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—"On Stage at Carnegie Hall: A Centennial Celebration." Aug. 13-17: "On Location: Carlin at Carnegie" (1983, HBO), with George Carlin; and "Andy Kaufman Plays Carnegie Hall" (1979, Showtime). . . . From Aug. 20: "Gala of Stars" (1981, PBS), with Marilyn Horne, Isaac Stern, Yo-Yo Ma, Itzhak Perlman, and others. Showings Tuesdays at 2:30 and 5:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 2:30. . . . ¶ "A Salute to Monty Python." From Aug. 13: "The Pythons" (1979, BBC), a documentary. Showings Tuesdays at 12:15, 2:30, and 5:30; Wednesdays through Fridays at 12:15 and 2:30; and Saturdays at 12:15.

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American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—"Leo McCarey: The King of Comedy," a program of films directed by McCarey. Aug. 13 at 2: "My Son John" (1951), with Robert Walker and Helen Hayes. . . . Aug. 14 at 2: "An Affair to Remember" (1957), with Cary Grant and Deborah Kerr. . . . Aug. 15 at 2: "Rally Round the Flag, Boys" (1958), with Paul Newman, Joanne Woodward, and Joan Collins. . . . Aug. 16 at 4: "Satan Never Sleeps" (1962), with William Holden and Clifton Webb. . . . ¶ A series of Western films. Aug. 17 and Aug. 20-21 at 2: "Coogan's Bluff" (1968, Don Siegel), with Clint Eastwood and Lee J. Cobb. . . . Aug. 17 at 4: "Lonesome Cowboys" (1968, Andy Warhol), with Viva and Taylor Mead. . . . Aug. 18 at 2: "The Wild Bunch" (†).

.orence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Aug. 14 at 12:30 and 6: "Les Années Folles" (1960, Miréa Alexandresco and Henri Torrent), a documentary. . . . ¶ Aug. 14 at 3:15 and 8:45: "Man About Town" (1946, René Clair; in French), with Maurice Chevalier, Marcelle Derrien, François Périer, and Gaston Modot. . . . ¶ Aug. 21 at 12:30 and 6: "The Proud and the Beautiful" (1953, Yves Allégret; in French), with Gérard Philipe, Michèle Morgan, Carlos Lopez Moctezuma, and Victor-Manuel Mendoza. . . . ¶ Aug. 21 at 3:15 and 8:45: "Riptide" (1948, Allégret; in French), with Madeleine Robinson, Philipe, Jane Marken, and Jean Servais.

Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., State Office Building, 163 W. 125th St. (873-5040)—Aug. 12 at 2 and 4:30: "Place of Weeping" (1988, Darel Roodt) and "Bikko: Breaking the Silence" (1988, Ollie Maruma). . . . ¶ Aug. 12 at 6:30: "To Sleep With Anger" (1990, Charles Burnett), with Danny Glover; and "Joe's Bed-Stuy Barbershop: We Cut Heads" (1983, Spike Lee). . . . ¶ Aug. 13 at 1: "Langston Hughes: The Dream Keeper" (1988, St. Clair Bourne), "From These Roots" (1978, William Greaves), and "Ida B. Wells" (1990, Greaves). . . . ¶ Aug. 13 at 3:35: "Glory" (1989, Edward Zwick), with Matthew Broderick, Denzel Washington, Morgan Freeman, and Cary Elwes; and "Frederick Douglass: An American Life" (1989, William Greaves). . . . ¶ Aug. 13 at 6:35: "Cooley High" (1972, Michael Schultz), with Glynn Turman; and "Hollywood Shuffle" (1987, Robert Townsend), with Keenen Ivory Wayans and Townsend. . . . ¶ Aug. 14 at 1 and 4:35: "Mo' Better Blues" (1990, Spike Lee), with Denzel Washington, Lee, Wesley Snipes, and Giancarlo Esposito; and "She's Gotta Have It" (1986, Spike Lee). . . . ¶ Aug. 14 at 6:30: "Sweet Sweetback's Baddasssss Song" (1973, Melvin Van Peebles); and "Identity Crisis" (1990, Van Peebles), with Mario and Melvin Van Peebles. . . . ¶ Aug. 15 at 1: "Sitting in Limbo" (1986, John N. Smith); "Benjamin Banneker: Freedom Man" (1987, Bob Walsh), with Ossie Davis; and "Lying Lips" (1939, Oscar Micheaux), with Robert Earl Jones. . . . ¶ Aug. 15 at 5: "Ganja and Hess" (1970, Bill Gunn), with Duane Jones; "Lord Chango" (1974, Ray Marsh), with Lawrence Cook; and "Abby" (1974, William Girdler), with William Marshall. . . . ¶ Aug. 16 at 1: "Putney Swope" (1969, Robert Downey), with Arnold Johnson and Antonio Fargas; and "I'm Gonna Git You Sucka" (1988, Keenen Ivory Wayans). . . . ¶ Aug. 16 at 4:30: "To Sleep With Anger"; and "The Spook Who Sat by the Door" (1973, Ivan Dixon), with Lawrence Cook. . . . ¶ Aug. 16 at 8:30: "The 1970 Motown Revue" (1989) and a three-hour program of film appearances by soul singer James Brown.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

An Angel at My Table—Based on the autobiography of the New Zealand novelist and poet Janet Frame. The film covers the first forty years or so of the writer's life—she was born in 1924—and takes close to three hours to tell the story. When it's all over, you feel that you know far too little about Janet Frame and far too much about the film's director, Jane Campion. The movie (which was made as a three-part miniseries for Australian television) is a succession of odd, mannered tableaux, more or less in the style of Campion's 1990 art-house hit, "Sweetie." The compositions emphasize the peculiarities of Janet's appearance, especially in her childhood and awkward adolescence: she has a stiff, frizzy mop of bright-orange hair, and her teeth are badly decayed. The Janet Frame we see in this film doesn't seem to have an inner life, and without that she has no life at all. Even the most dramatic events in her life are treated so flatly and elliptically that we're unable to respond; time after time, we find that we can't orient ourselves in crucial scenes, because the director hasn't bothered to establish the characters or the setting. Writers' lives are weird enough without being subjected to this sort of willful disruption of their emotional continuity. Campion's perverse exercise in biographical filmmaking deserves a new title: "My Incomprehensible Career." Janet is played by three actresses: as a child, by Alexia Keogh; as a young teenager, by Karen Fergusson; and, as an adult, by Kerry Fox. Screenplay by Laura Jones.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 6/3/91.) (Angelika Film Center.)

Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey—Spotty, amusing, and openly silly. For those who missed the first entry, Bill (Alex Winter) and Ted (Keanu Reeves) are boyz n the burbs with dysfunctional families and zero brains. They channel their energies into a teen-age-mutant vocabulary (Dude! Duder! Excellent! Bogus!) and a series of synchronized hand riffs. They're also destined to be heroes of future world civilization, a prospect that alarms this film's villain (Joss Ackland), a twenty-second-century fascist dude who sends evil robots of Bill and Ted back in time to kill the originals before an epochal Battle of the Bands. In the middle of this confident retread, the director, Pete Hewitt, and the writers, Chris Matheson and Ed Solomon, sandwich something far more free and funny—a slapstick version of "The Seventh Seal" in which Bill and Ted play games with Death. William Sadler, so terrifying and sardonic as Walter Hill's "The Man Who Was Death" (for HBO's "Tales from the Crypt" series), is splendidly outré as the Grim Reaper. He undergoes a second (or maybe a first) childhood after Bill and Ted best him in diversions like Clue and Twister. His expressions of abashment are almost touching, and his very Old World accent ranks with the best of Peter Sellers.—M.S. (Loews Village Theatre VII, and 23rd St. West Triplex. . . . ¶ 62nd & Broadway; through Aug. 13.)

Blonde Venus (1932)—Marlene Dietrich in one of those forgettable stories about women who "sacrifice" their bodies for the noblest of reasons (sick husband Herbert Marshall, child Dickie Moore); the man she sells herself to is played by the young and not yet sufficiently stylized Cary Grant. Once degraded, she sinks down to flophouse level before she pulls herself together and becomes the toast of the night-club world. The director, Josef von Sternberg, caps the silliness by putting Dietrich into a monkey suit to sing "Hot Voodoo"—a number that may define camp. (It's the only memorable sequence in the movie.) With Sidney Toler as a detective, Cecil Cunningham as a night-club hostess, and Hattie McDaniel, Sterling Holloway, and Dewey Robinson. The screenplay is by Jules Furthman and S. K. Lauren, based on von Sternberg's story.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Aug. 20.)

Boyz N the Hood—The writer and director, John Singleton, is a twenty-three-year-old graduate of the U.S.C. film school. This movie, his first, is a classically constructed—and therefore rather predictable—coming-of-age drama about young black men growing up on the mean streets of south-central Los Angeles. The picture conveys a vivid sense of the dangers, both physical and emotional, of day-to-day existence in this ravaged urban environment. Even the quietest domestic scenes are charged with a kind of battle-front tension: there's always the ominous metronomic beat of police helicopters in the background, and sudden sputters of gunfire seem to intrude on every moment of calm or reflection. It's a war zone, and its inhabitants—the people on the front lines—mostly don't have the luxury of planning long-range survival strategies: they're too busy reacting to the immediate, unremitting daily threats. Singleton's evocation of real people's struggles to find some measure of peace and sanity in these grim urban circumstances is heartfelt and often moving, and the movie provides a welcome corrective to the dehumanizing sensationalism of the local-news version of inner-city life. But the young filmmaker's professionalism and precocious self-assurance sometimes work against his best instincts. Singleton's plot is disappointingly conventional; it obeys screenwriting-class rules. The experience he's dealing with here deserves something more than the tidy dramatic structure that he has imposed on it. We get glimpses of what the movie might have been in the complex, magnetic performance of Ice Cube, a rap star (formerly of N.W.A.), who plays a neighborhood gangster type named Doughboy. Also with Cuba Gooding, Jr., Larry Fishburne, Nia Long, Tyra Ferrell, and Angela Bassett.—T.R. (Loews Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema II, Chelsea Cinemas, Olympia, and Loews Astor Plaza.)

Broadway Melody of 1936 (1935)—An M-G-M musical with Eleanor Powell (a dynamo, all right, but she manages to be wholesome even in glittering top hat and tails), Robert Taylor, Jack Benny, Frances Langford, Una Merkel, and June Knight. A good score by Arthur Freed and Nacio Herb Brown includes "I Gotta Feelin' You're Foolin'," "You Are My Lucky Star," and "Broadway Rhythm." Roy Del Ruth directed.—P.K. (Public Theatre; Aug. 20-21.)

City Slickers—This feel-good comedy, directed by Ron Underwood from a script by Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandel, is a depressingly efficient piece of Hollywood product. The hero, Mitch Robbins (Billy Crystal), is a thirty-nine-year-old New York family man who's going through a killer midlife crisis. His wife (Patricia Wettig) gets so fed up with his moping that she virtually orders him to take a vacation with his buddies Ed (Bruno Kirby) and Phil (Daniel Stern); Ed, a daredevil, macho type, has arranged for them to spend two weeks on a real cattle drive out West. Mitch's wife looks him in the eye, and says earnestly, "Go and find your smile"—and, ninety minutes later, there it is, a grin as big as all outdoors. His pals pick up the odd nugget of wisdom along the trail, too. The movie alternates predictable tenderfoot gags (sore behinds, stampedes, and the like) with long, ludicrous passages of group-therapy-on-the-range. Jack Palance, as Curly, the trail boss, manages some dry, macabre comic effects, and the animals are good—they're interesting to look at,

Helen Gahagan and Randolph Scott in "She"

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What "Citizen Kane" was to movie lovers in 1941, "The Wild Bunch" (playing August 18 and 23 at the American Museum of the Moving Image) was to cinéastes *in 1969. Its adrenaline rush of revelations seemed to explode the parameters of the screen. The director and co-writer, Sam Peckinpah, turned the last stand of the Hole-in-the-Wall Gang into a wrenching piece of early-twentieth-century mythology. His filmmaking both evinced and catalyzed complex feelings about the outlaws' freedom, brotherhood, and professionalism, their manliness and childishness, and the way they experienced the closing of the West as Purgatory and used Latin America as an escape hatch. The movie remains the most extraordinary summation of Peckinpah's tender-torturous personality. He rips himself open and, against all odds, puts himself back together frame by bloody frame.*

The actors include William Holden as Pike Bishop, the bunch's leader; Robert Ryan as Deke Thornton, his ex-partner and reluctant nemesis; Ernest Borgnine as Dutch, Pike's right-hand gun; and Ben Johnson, Warren Oates, Edmond O'Brien, Strother Martin, Bo Hopkins, Jaime Sanchez, and Emilio Fernandez. The script, co-written with Walon Green, puts the cast through tests of individual strength and loyalty that dramatize Peckinpah's preoccupations with the bandits' appetites and anarchy, and with the codes and social pressures that rein them in. These trials release the group energy of the most quirkily expressive ensemble ever assembled for an action movie. Holden's forceful, gnarly performance gains from the recent restoration of flashbacks that were cut from the original American-release prints. These scenes depict Pike as a man who screwed up in the past and is now determined to pull off his last job—and "do it right." Peckinpah did it right in "The Wild Bunch"; he produced an American movie that equals or surpasses the best of Kurosawa. "The Wild Bunch" is the Götterdämmerung of Westerns.

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and they don't make bad jokes. You can't help sympathizing with the cattle; by the time the movie is over, you know what it feels like to be part of the herd. Also with Helen Slater.—T.R. (6/17/91) (Chelsea Cinemas, and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ Beekman; through Aug. 13.)

The Doctor—Although it's sure to hook some viewers who want to see the medical establishment get knocked, this is no exposé—it's yet another story of identity crisis in the professional class, a fraternal, if not identical, twin of "Regarding Henry." William Hurt plays the surgical golden boy who develops a case of galloping humanity after he's diagnosed with throat cancer; Christine Lahti and Charlie Korsmo play his neglected wife and son; Elizabeth Perkins is the life-force who inspires him (she's suffering from a Grade IV brain tumor); and, in matched parts, Mandy Patinkin is a callous Jewish doctor (Hurt's longtime partner) and Adam Arkin is a saintly Jewish doctor (who shows Hurt correct values). The director, Randa Haines, and the screenwriter, Robert Caswell, titillate the audience with a barrage of doctors' jokes and then try to prove that the cynical professionalism of hospital staffs is no laughing matter. In effect, the movie goes from comic shtick to problem-drama shtick, and fuses them. Hurt's performance is the type usually described as "accomplished," but what exactly does it accomplish? It's a careful embodiment of a clammed-up individual; not a hint of zest or dirt or soulfulness seeps out. Based on "A Taste of My Own Medicine," by Ed Rosenbaum, M.D.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, Gramercy, Cinema I, and Loews Paramount.)

Europa Europa—This superb film by the Polish director Agnieszka Holland is based on the memoirs of Salomon Perel, a German Jew who spent much of the Second World War passing for Aryan in an élite Hitler Youth academy. The movie dramatizes this almost inconceivable survival story with a surprisingly light touch. It bounds from one jaw-dropping episode to the next with the speed and the unnerving neutrality of a picaresque adventure, and never pauses to judge its ambiguous hero; it's content to let the ironies of his situation collect around him like reflections in dressing-room mirrors. His family's flight from the Nazis begins in 1938, on the eve of his bar mitzvah. Solly (played by a remarkable young actor, Marco Hofschneider) lands first in Lodz, Poland, and then in the Soviet Union, where he becomes a star pupil in a Communist school. After the Wehrmacht invades Russia and takes him prisoner, he reincarnates himself as an orphaned "pure" German, an Aryan child wandering in the barbaric eastern wilderness; as translator and mascot, he accompanies the German soldiers on their march through Russia. By the time he is initiated into the Hitler Youth, he has already run through several identities, and has proved himself capable of playing his roles with conviction and enthusiasm. We remain, however, constantly aware (as he is) of what his Nazi disguise conceals—his circumcised penis, the irreversible and unambiguous sign of his identity as a Jew. Holland uses this physical evidence of Solly's Jewishness as the fulcrum of the movie's delicately balanced narrative and moral tensions. She shows us the thoroughness of Nazi terror in the pained expression of a teen-age boy who doesn't dare allow himself to be seduced. In German and Russian.—T.R. (7/1/91) (Lincoln Plaza.)

Gold Diggers of 1933—A funny, good-natured backstage musical, and a Depression period piece as well. It sums up what is meant by the phrase "pure thirties." Ginger Rogers wears a costume made of big coins and sings "We're in the Money" in pig Latin, and sixty electrically wired chorus girls, singing "In the shadows let me come and sing to you" while waltzing and playing violins, merge to form one great big neon fiddle. Warners advertised that this film would "surpass the glories of '42nd Street' " (which had come out earlier in the year), and the geometric choreographer Busby Berkeley and the songwriters Harry Warren and Al Dubin all tried to top themselves. Mervyn LeRoy directed this time, and the plot is something about Dick Powell as a blue-blooded songwriter trying to raise money for a show he has written. The cast is a *Who's Who* of Warners types: the prim, awesomely untalented Ruby Keeler, and Joan Blondell, Warren William, Aline MacMahon, Ned Sparks, Guy Kibbee, Sterling Holloway, Ferdinand Gottschalk, and Bill Barty as the infant who winks at Dick Powell and hands him a can opener to use on Ruby Keeler's shiny tin costume, in the "Pettin' in the Park" sequence. Busby Berkeley appears in a bit part as the backstage callboy (can this really be the correct term?) shouting such directions as "Onstage for the Forgotten Man number!" The black singer in this number is Etta Moten. The script, by Erwin Gelsey and James Seymour, is based on an Avery Hopwood play; cinematography by Sol Polito.—P.K. (Public Theatre; Aug. 16-18.)

101 Dalmatians (1961)—One of the few Disney animated features that please adults as much as children, this action comedy has loads of waggish charm. The plot is out of a horror film. As Cruella De Vil prepares ninety-nine young Dalmatians for the kill so she can make dogskin coats, you can't help thinking, "The Silence of the Pups." By telling the story from the perspective of Pongo and Perdita, parents of fifteen dognap victims, the Disney team turns it into a light-fantastic parody: a dog's-eye (or child's-eye) view of storybook Britain. Humans are "pets," and a country-wide canine corps takes over when agencies like Scotland Yard fail. Cruella has been justly celebrated for her Tallulah-from-Hell flair (Betty Lou Gerson contributes an arsenal of Bankhead-like snarls). But Pongo is every bit her match. He's a gallant, resourceful animal with surprising pockets of slyness and gaiety, and the crisp, virile voice of Rod Taylor. Headed by a blustery sheepdog colonel, a Kipling-esque trio of barnyard soldiers aid Pongo and Perdita. The small army of pups form a lovable composite character and a constantly changing sight gag. Trekking through a blizzard-blasted landscape, they're a cross between a canine caterpillar chain and a coal-flecked snowdrift. Bill Peet wrote the smart script, from Dodie Smith's book; Wolfgang Reitherman, Clyde Geronimi, and Hamilton S. Luske directed.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Metro Cinema. Matinées only.)

Life Stinks—Mel Brooks' latest is barely a comedy: it's mostly a Capra-esque whimsy about street people. Brooks stars as billionaire Goddard Bolt, who takes a rival tycoon's bet that he can't last for a month as a homeless person. Bolt foolishly thinks that he's shrewd enough to flourish in any circumstance; Brooks would be better off if that were true. The role of a pampered plutocrat who touches bottom clamps down on his funniest quality—his go-for-broke irrepressibility. Only a couple of scenes have a saving gracelessness: Brooks and Rudy De Luca (as an indigent who thinks he's J. Paul Getty) slap each other silly like the Three Stooges rolled into two. Lesley Ann Warren tries too hard to be feisty, then magical, as a fairy-tale bag lady. With Jeffrey Tambor and Howard Morris; from a script by Brooks, De Luca, and Steve Haberman (they dreamed up the story with Ron Clark).—M.S. (Loews Village Theatre VII, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ Embassy; through Aug. 15.)

The Little Shop of Horrors (1960)—Amateurish yet funny, in a gross way. A simpleton (Jonathan Haze) who works in a florist shop has a prize plant that becomes a voracious, blood-seeking man-eater. It cries, "Feed Me! Feed Me!" The film is notable for the performance that Jack Nicholson gives in a minor role; as a pain freak who is in ecstasy in a dentist's chair, he shows the comic intensity that later made him a star. Directed by Roger Corman, from a script by Charles B. Griffith.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Aug. 19-20.)

The Miracle—A beautiful new film by the Irish writer and director Neil Jordan ("Mona Lisa," "The Company of Wolves"). The setting is the coastal town of Bray, which is a short train ride from Dublin. Two teen-agers Jimmy (Niall Byrne) and Rose (Lorraine Pilkington), spend most of their days wandering along the seaside promenade and making up stories about the people they run into: taking off from the human material that presents itself to them, the kids trade verbal riffs with the gleeful competitiveness of jamming musicians. One day, they spot a mysterious-looking blond woman (Beverly D'Angelo), and Jimmy becomes obsessed with her. He pursues her, in Bray and in Dublin, with an ardor that's partly sexual and partly something else—a feeling so muddled and inchoate that he can't put a name to it. Jordan turns this simple story into a clear, complete vision of experience: everything we see (and hear) flows into everything else with an unpredictable rightness. The imagery draws on some pretty outré sources, and the climax—the miracle of the title—is a daring, flamboyant gesture. But Jordan manages to unite everything—the florid imagery, the dark emotional undertones, the flaky comedy, the astonishing physical beauty of the Irish seacoast—into a single, unbroken mood, a smooth arc connecting the past and the present, the familiar and the unforeseen.—T.R. (7/15/91) (Village East Cinema and Cinema 3rd Avenue.)

Mobsters—When Christian Slater, as young Lucky Luciano, tells Meyer Lansky (Patric Dempsey), Bugsy Siegel (Richard Grieco) and Frank Costello (Costas Mandylor) th

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it's time to play "with the big boys," he's delivering the statement of purpose for this bloody bore of a Mob travesty. It's an excuse for the latest crop of media-spawned personalities—the male equivalent of starlets—to invade the heavy-duty genre of the gangster film. They don't come up to Cagney's spats. The witless script, by Michael Mahern and Nicholas Kazan, and the goosed-up direction, by Michael Karbelnikoff, present the antiheroes as angels without dirty faces. These Jewish and Italian thugs bring an ecumenical spirit as well as modern business organization to the founding of the Syndicate. The moviemakers regard this as quite an accomplishment.—M.S. (Baronet, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, and National Twin. . . . ¶ Metro Cinema. Evenings only.)

THE NAKED GUN 2½: THE SMELL OF FEAR—Leslie Nielsen plays Frank Drebin, a middle-aged police lieutenant whose lethal weapon is utter obliviousness. This movie—like its predecessors, the 1982 TV series "Police Squad!" and the 1988 film "The Naked Gun"—has the look of cheap, hasty television action drama. It's oblivious of production values, narrative sense, and all the higher, finer aspects of the human spirit—of everything, that is, except the impulse to spray us with jokes and knock us out of our chairs. The director, David Zucker, has a defiantly cheesy style. For him, nothing's ever too trashy or worn out to be used again; what he practices is, in the truest sense, pulp comedy. There's a hint of an enviromental theme in the plot of "NG 2½," but Zucker and his co-writer, Pat Proft, never allow it to slow down the picture's relentless barrage of slapstick, movie parodies, outrageous double-entendres, and cracked musical production numbers. And Leslie Nielsen is inspired. He plays Drebin as a straight arrow who's finally letting go, giving in to his repressed impulses: he sings, he dances, he loves, he shoots to kill. Nielsen combines B-movie earnestness, exuberant mugging, and a trouper's slightly desperate cheerfulness: he turns this rather alarming character into a sweet, ebullient lunatic—albeit one who's hell on innocent bystanders.—T.R. (7/29/91) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Worldwide Cinemas, and Loews Festival. . . . ¶ Movieland 8th Street Triplex; through Aug. 20.)

ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST (1975)—Smashingly effective version of Ken Kesey's novel about a rebel outcast, McMurphy (Jack Nicholson), who is locked in a hospital for the insane. The book was a lyric jag, and it became a nonconformists' bible. Published in 1962, it contained the prophetic essence of the whole Vietnam period of revolutionary politics going psychedelic. Miloš Forman, who directed the movie version, must have understood how crude the poetic-paranoid vision of the book would look on the screen after the sixties paranoia had lost its nightmarish buoyancy, and he and the scenarists—Lawrence Hauben, and then Bo Goldman—did the intelligent job of loosening Kesey's schematism. Set in 1963, the movie retains most of Kesey's ideas but doesn't diagram them the way the book does. Louise Fletcher gives a masterly performance as Nurse Ratched—she's the company woman incarnate. And Will Sampson, a towering full-blooded Creek, is very impressive as Chief Broom, the resurrected catatonic. Forman's tentative, literal-minded direction lacks the excitement of movie art, and there's a callousness running through his work; he gets laughs by pretending that mental disturbance is the same as ineptitude. But the story and the acting make the film emotionally powerful. And Nicholson, looking punchy, tired, and baffled—and not on top of his character (as he often is)—lets you see into him, rather than controlling what he lets you see.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Aug. 16-17.)

POINT BREAK—Keanu Reeves keeps a straight face and gets a few intentional laughs as Johnny Utah, an F.B.I. agent searching for a band of surfer bank robbers. "My character is a total control freak," Reeves told an interviewer, "and the ocean beats him up and changes him." Actually, the director, Kathryn Bigelow, is the control freak. She maintains a tight hold on technical stuff (there are a couple of gorgeous skydiving scenes) while ignoring anything that's involving or spontaneous in character, emotion, or storytelling. She throws too much of the film to a gaseous adrenaline guru named Bodhi. A sixties holdover, Bodhi gets bad laughs, partly because Patrick Swayze plays him as if he were auditioning for the look-into-my-eyes school of acting.—M.S. (Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Chelsea Cinemas; through Aug. 13.)

REGARDING HENRY—Harrison Ford, hot-shot lawyer, takes bullets in the head and shoulder from a corner-market thief. He loses his memory and physical control, regains the ability to talk and walk, and discovers that his long-spurned wife (Annette Bening) and thirteen-year-old daughter (Mikki Allen) are all that's important to him. The writer, Jeffrey Abrams, combines feeble finger-pointing satire of the success-obsessed upper class with life lessons that are hard to swallow. They won't go down past the artificially induced lumps in the throat. The director, Mike Nichols, in his second attempt to wring tears and laughs from *haute bourgeois* marital dramedy, falls flatter than ever—he goes from "Heartburn" to filmmaking arrhythmia. With the exception of an eager beagle named Buddy, this is the worst-performed, limpest, least credible Nichols movie yet. While it purports to attack yuppie values, the hero fulfills the latest yuppie fantasy: chucking everything and starting from square one. A nice trick for those who can afford it.—M.S. (Angelika Film Center, Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews Tower East, Guild, Worldwide Cinemas, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

SHE (1935)—Hilarious, terrible, essential. Over the land of Kor rules She (Helen Gahagan, before her political career), kept young throughout five centuries by her Flame of Eternal Youth. The stagy décor of Kor is in the Art Deco style of Radio City Music Hall, and you keep expecting the Rockettes to turn up. The dialogue, however, belongs to an earlier age: the great She addresses her subjects with such lines as "You haunters of darkness, how you try my patience!" A pair of lovebirds (Helen Mack and Randolph Scott) intrude upon the realm, and She, who takes a fancy to Scott and plans to make a human sacrifice of her rival, tries one too many dips in the Flame. No one but H. Rider Haggard could have dreamed up the story; Irving Pichel and Lansing C. Holden directed. With Nigel Bruce. Camp like this is a rarity. Adapted by Ruth Rose, with some assistance by Dudley Nichols.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Aug. 16-17.)

STOLEN KISSES (1968)—This first romantic comedy by François Truffaut is charming and likable, but maybe too easily likable. (The tenderness is a little flabby.) It's a series of improvisations on the young manhood and love life of Antoine Doinel (Jean-Pierre Léaud), who was first presented at twelve, suffering from the callousness of the adult world, in "The 400 Blows," and later appeared as an adolescent in Truffaut's episode of "Love at Twenty." Here, Truffaut seems to start with the assumption that we already love his little Antoine and will find his ineptness and incompetence adorable. The feat of a master of improvisation would be to achieve the looseness and texture of "life" and the "magic" of movie art simultaneously—to tell a story as if it had been found. This story seems to have been planted; we're conscious of the players trotting around the streets of Paris playacting for the camera. It's a pleasantly negligible movie, with free, idiosyncratic touches: a little documentary interpolation on the speedy mail service, a lovely moment when the heroine (Claude Jade) teaches Antoine a method of buttering toast, and, best of all, a marvellous character invention—Michel Lonsdale as the man who hires detectives to find out why nobody likes him. (He thinks there must be a conspiracy.) With Delphine Seyrig and Marie-France Pisier. The script is by Truffaut, Claude de Givray, and Bernard Revon; the music is by Antoine Duhamel. In French.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Aug. 15-17.)

TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY—The killer cyborg who was played by Arnold Schwarzenegger in the original "Terminator" (1984) has returned—only this time he's the hero. The first film, which was written and directed by James Cameron, is one of the genre-movie classics of the eighties: a lean, witty science-fiction movie without great pretensions to significance. The sequel, also written (with William Wisher) and directed by Cameron, is far less satisfying. The picture is full of spectacular action sequences and dazzling special effects, but the narrative doesn't have the snap of the original's: it's lumbering and monotonous, and it carries a heavy-handed anti-nuke message. The old, Schwarzenegger-model Terminator (the T-800) has been superseded by a more advanced model, the T-1000 (Robert Patrick), who is sleeker and more versatile. T-800, who represented the ultimate in destructive technology in the first film, seems almost human here: compared to T-1000, he's a vulnerable guy (or guyoid). The whole movie is based on the insane conceit that Arnold Schwarzenegger is the *underdog*. That's a stretch.—T.R. (7/29/91) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, Gemini, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

At the Public, Carmen Miranda in "That Night in Rio"

TRUST—This independent film by the young writer and director Hal Hartley ("The Unbelievable Truth") takes place entirely in a white, middle-class neighborhood in a forlorn-looking Long Island town. His Long Island is a bleak, featureless, neither-here-nor-there milieu. It's a place where anything can happen and almost nothing does—where parents and childen, living together in tight quarters, torment and negotiate with each other just to create some drama for themselves. In Hartley's world, moody ex-cons and earnest high-school girls are the only really interesting people around. This picture tells the story of the strange relationship—part romance, part tutorial, part vaudeville act—between a pair of suburban losers, Matthew (Martin Donovan) and Maria (Adrienne Shelly). He's a thirtyish, chain-smoking depressive who lives with his widowed father (John MacKay). She's an adolescent bimbo who, when she announces to her family and her boyfriend that she's pregnant, discovers that this persona isn't going to be much use to her; she decides that she has to change her life. The story moves by surprising leaps, with the rhythm of the main characters' erratic, uncertain progress toward an awareness of possibilities beyond their limited, cramped experience. Hartley is alert to the absurdities of their situation; he keeps the film's tone dry, and makes the threatening, pervasive nothingness of the milieu grotesquely funny. His style is a risky blend of formal abstraction and dramatic realism, and it demands resourceful actors. Donovan has a gangling, dishevelled charm, and his bummed-out line readings are superbly timed; and Shelly brings off Maria's transformation from teen-age temptress to serious young woman with extraordinary ease. Under Hartley's direction, they seem to be inventing an acting style for a brand-new genre: the existentialist comedy of manners. Also with Merritt Nelson, Edie Falco, and Gary Sauer.—T.R. (8/12/91) (Angelika Film Center, and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

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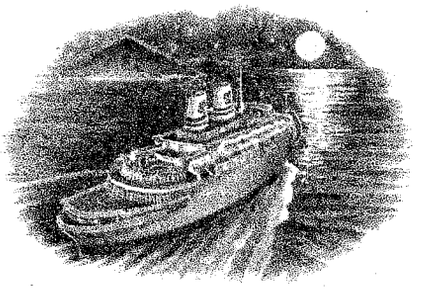

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THE NEW YORKER

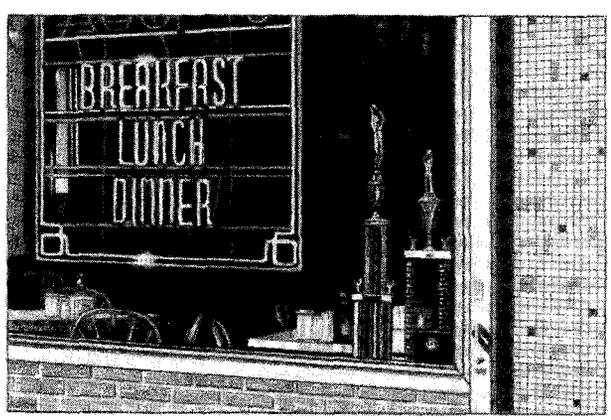
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

FOR the past several years, South Africa's black townships have been the scene of bloody clashes, which have left more than five thousand people dead. The South African government has sought to portray this "black-on-black violence" as an expression of political and tribal differences between Nelson Mandela's African National Congress and Inkatha, a Zulu-based organization headed by Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, who is a conservative regional warlord admired by many Western leaders, among them President Bush and Prime Minister John Major. Various human-rights organizations, including Africa Watch, have accused the South African government of assisting Inkatha in its attacks on its opponents. On July 10th, after President Bush announced at a White House news conference that the United States was lifting sanctions against South Africa, the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Herman Cohen, was asked if the United States was satisfied that the South African government was not involved in perpetuating the violence between Inkatha and the A.N.C. He answered, "We have looked at all of the accusations. We have deployed our own resources to try and find out. We have seen no evidence that the South African government entities are supporting black-on-black violence. This does not exclude the activities of private citizens, which we're not aware of. But we have seen no evidence that the government entities are doing anything in that line."

Mr. Cohen's statement, which, of course, reflected official policy, was not reported by the American press. But it was heard in South Africa, and at least one South African leader was dismayed. "Any serious student of South African politics will reject this statement with the derision and contempt it deserves," Kobus Jordaan announced. Mr. Jordaan is not a member of the African National Congress. He is, as his name suggests, an Afrikaner; he served in the National Party government for many years; and, while he is now a member of the more moderate Democratic Party, he is considered a centrist. Indeed, although he criticized Mr. Cohen, he said, "I fully support President Bush's decision to lift sanctions."

As it happened, Mr. Jordaan had recently been invited by the American Ambassador to South Africa, William Swing, to visit the United States on a State Department-sponsored tour. All the arrangements had been made, and Mr. Jordaan was looking forward to the trip, he said, but after reading Mr. Cohen's statement he concluded, "As much as I would have loved to visit the U.S. and share my dreams and ideals for my country with the American people, my conscience does not allow me to accept U.S. state funds as long as the present administration continues distorting the realities in South Africa. I have no option, therefore, but to pull out of my proposed visit."



Mr. Jordaan's response to Assistant Secretary Cohen appeared, in the form of an Op-Ed piece, in the *Weekly Mail*, a widely respected Johannesburg newspaper. It was published in the same issue in which the *Weekly Mail* broke the story, based on leaked government documents, that the South African government had been covertly funding Inkatha. That was on July 19th. Over the next week, as more details of the covert funding emerged, the story grew into a scandal, and on July 29th President F. W. de Klerk was forced to demote two of his ministers. Still, the disclosure of the secret funding of Inkatha (the South African press has inevitably dubbed the scandal Inkathagate) does not directly rebut Mr. Cohen's remarks about the lack of evidence of government involvement in the violence: Pretoria claims that the money was used for Inkatha's political rallies and to help its campaign against sanctions, which Inkatha opposed.

On the same day that the story about the secret funding broke, however, the British newspaper the *Independent* carried a story that did directly link the South African government to the violence. John Carlin, the paper's South Africa correspondent, reported that, according to a former sergeant in the Special Forces of South Africa's Directorate of Military Intelligence, "state-hired assassins" had been responsible for an extraordinary terrorist attack on a train going from Johannesburg to Soweto in September, 1990. In that attack, two gangs killed twenty-six commuters and wounded more than a

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hundred, and the victims' bodies were strewn over five miles of track. The former sergeant identified the commando unit and the regiment of the Special Forces which were responsible for the attack, and said that "friends" of his were involved. "They got on the train with 'pangas' [machetes] and AK-47s," he told Carlin. "They shot the people and killed them with the AK-47s." Carlin also interviewed former South African Defense Force officers, who repeatedly suggested that "the violence in the black townships of the last year, in which more than 2,000 people have died in the Johannesburg area alone, has been orchestrated by Military Intelligence, with Special Forces doing the killings." Four days later, the *Independent* weighed in again, this time giving the results of a joint investigative effort with BBC radio. "Our investigation revealed not only that the police turn a blind eye to Inkatha atrocities . . . but we found occasions when the police joined in the murders," Carlin wrote. Details were provided in three articles, which took up nearly a full page.

The American press, which until recently has seemed to share our government's enthusiasm for Chief Buthelezi, picked up the *Weekly Mail's* story about the covert funding—it was the basis for a front-page story in the *Times*—and it has steadily pursued what the Washington *Post* has described as "the biggest scandal" of de Klerk's Presidency. However, we have seen no follow-up in the American press to the *Independent's* stories, or any original reporting by American correspondents of specific examples of government involvement in the violence, which, if they were substantiated, would prove an even more serious scandal. As for our government, Assistant Secretary Cohen, testifying before Congress on July 31st—twelve days after the *Independent's* still unchallenged initial story—merely echoed his answer to the question he had been asked three weeks before about the South African government's involvement in violence: "We do not have evidence."

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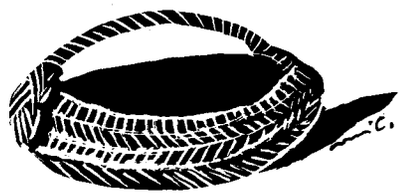
Cordially

ONE of the major changes that have come to American society with the advent of the fax machine is the heightened prestige of overnight-delivery service. While we've lately been hearing about junk faxes, so far we've heard practically nothing about junk Express Mail. Overnight delivery now seems to be associated not with the mere transmission of data but, rather, with the safe conduct of valuable documents, like a signed prenuptial agreement or a tardily filed tax return. And we've just learned of an even more personal, and hence more prestigious, mailing method: unstamped delivery by carrier, also known as leafleting. Recently, when the Radio City Station invited people in its Zip Code to an open house, it mailed its invitations first class to the business customers; the residential customers, though—the Postal Service's pride and joy—were leafleted. Once we had got a look at the text, we were on our way. "The manager/postmaster New York Division and the employees of Radio City Station cordially invite you to our open house," it read. When was the last time you saw "cordially" on something official from the post office? And when was the last time you entered a post-office lobby to find red, white, and blue balloons sprouting from the institutional expanses? By the time we came upon a television set and adjacent videocassette recorder mounted on a cart in the center of the room without a guard in sight, we were ready to believe anything.

The tape in progress was about the growth of the American postal system. We saw pictures of Ben Franklin, then of a pony-express rider in galloping transit, then of some guys in sports shirts and slacks. The last group was standing behind a conveyor belt loaded with mail, and at first we thought we were looking at another still photograph, but then we began to notice this guy or that one picking up an envelope and tossing it into a sack. Meanwhile, a voice-over told of the fateful year 1966, when Americans insisted on sending so much mail to each other that postal employees in Chicago had to work double shifts. For three weeks, the situation was so bad that it became, according to the voice-over, "a race with catastrophe." The United States Congress stepped in to take emergency action: four years later, the completely reorganized and streamlined body we know today as the United States Postal Service was born.



An unmarked door at the end of the lobby had opened, and people were lining up to go through it. We joined the line, and soon we met up with a postal representative who said he was from the station's inquiry-and-complaint window and it was great to see us hello how were we doing? He wanted to let us know some things about the station—that it sells stamps, for example. It also handles some three-quarters of a million pieces of mail each day, six days a week, which is a lot—whew!—and its computers sort the mail more than ten times as fast as human hands can, and at one-tenth of the cost. And among the post office's special services is next-day express delivery, "for those who desire it." Then he asked for questions. One visitor raised his hand and said, "A letter from Queens postmarked June 2nd didn't reach me in Manhattan until June 11th. Why is that?" The postal rep deliberated for a moment, then said that was a very good question and as the tour went along the questioner would meet someone who could answer it and he should be sure to pose it at that time have a nice day.

For the next twenty minutes, we were part of a group cruising from rep to rep. This gave us the chance to meet and greet and have a very nice day with some of the people who make it possible for a letter from Queens postmarked June 2nd to arrive on June 11th in Manhattan. We also learned an interesting bit of news. The Postal Service is planning to become almost entirely automated by 1995—when the computers will be sufficiently intelligent to give open houses for themselves—and its customers can *help*. Actually, they'll have to help: they're going to be responsible for affixing forty per cent of the bar codes on the regulation envelopes that total automation is going to entail.

After a while, the group we were in beached up in the station lunchroom, and we were able to chat with the man who had asked the question about the letter from Queens. Had he got a reply? "Ha!" he said. Then he walked over to a card table holding a couple of urns and poured himself coffee.

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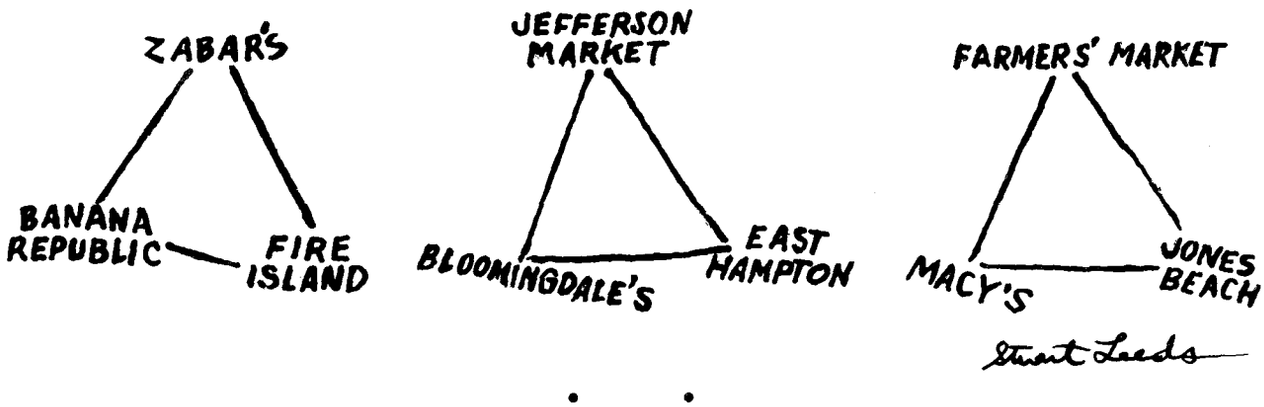

Soon a formal program was under way there in the lunchroom. We heard welcoming remarks like "Welcome to our house!" and "Thank you for taking time out to visit your post office." A letter carrier introduced as Chilly Willy performed magic rope tricks and conversed with a wooden dummy named Roscoe about such matters as the price of a first-class stamp. A raffle was held, and three visitors were awarded prizes: a Love-stamp refrigerator magnet, a Love-stamp mug, and a stuffed bear wearing an undershirt printed with the Postal Service's American bald eagle. A new videotape was projected on a television near the coffee urns. It was called "The Adventure of a Letter," and it started off with a man getting into a postal cart as he explained that he was pretending to be a piece of mail about to travel from New Hampshire to Los Angeles.

"Oh, please! I'm not pushing *him*," a woman behind us said to the woman beside her.

"Look," the second woman said. "Now he has to go back to New Hampshire, fast."

"He wants to go Express Mail," the first woman said, "but he doesn't know that he's gotta wait a half hour until the clerk at the window comes back from lunch."

As a parting gesture, every visitor received a special plastic bag that said on it "We Deliver" in letters two inches high, and, underneath, "Express Mail" in letters a half inch high. Inside the bag were various pamphlets and booklets explaining how the business customer could organize itself so as to make life easier and simpler for the Postal Service. We also found two commemorative mailers. One bore a stamp honoring Cole Porter, who was certainly a man of letters. The other summed up the message that your Postal Service wants to get across to you. The stamp showed a single, four-letter word that appeared to have been handwritten in that ornate cursive script with back loops and curlicues which suggests the eighteenth century. The word was "Love."

Mellow

"I HAVEN'T had any death threats yet, but my press agent, Ted, keeps hoping I will," David Marquis said the other day. David, an actor who serves as his own impresario, writes what he calls "visual theatre works" and produces them downtown, in the outer boroughs, and in an array of Eastern Bloc countries. You may have seen the one about a fat man and his dead cat. His most recent work, a monologue, which he is performing at the curb in front of Federal Hall, on Wall Street, is about the beach town in California where he grew up, a town that only David and reporters with unusual courage, or no byline, dare to name.

The hippies who live there are so wary of strangers—who might question the wisdom of the People, or wear matching accessories, or find fulfillment in golf—that they routinely destroy all road signs leading to the town. They have also brought building to a near-halt, on the theory that if you let people build houses, the wrong kind of people, the kind who can afford to build houses, will flock there. (However, nobody minds if you set up a tepee or live in an old school bus.) Over the years, painters and writers have received threatening calls and letters when they publicly mentioned the town outside its borders. The residents are marked, David says in his show, by "their mellowness rather than their tolerance."

You may know the town by one of its pseudonyms: Orville Schell, in his book "The Town That Fought to Save Itself," called it Briones; Ernest Callenbach, in a couple of novels, called it Ecotopia; and some people call it Lemuria, which may or may not have been a lost continent, similar to Atlantis, that just turned up one day on the coast of Northern California. But the intrepid call it Bolinas (rhymes with "freeness"). They even tell you where it is: about thirty miles north of San Francisco, in Marin County. You won't find it by following road signs, of course, but you'll know you've arrived by the high VW-bus-to-person ratio.

Come to Federal Hall and meet David. He's the one with the big smile. No, not that one—that's his press agent, Ted, who's wearing more jewelry on one ear than we have in our jewelry box at home. David's over there, with one earring, a ponytail, and some visual aids. A helper gives you a square of "Zodiac Quality" carpet to make sitting on the steps a pleasure. And here's your own personal envelope of objects from Bolinas: dried twigs; a Xerox of a sign about a lost dog named Zoom ("back legs arthritic, front rt. leg limp, one chipped front tooth, no collar, some mange above tail"); and a police report that a man had given another man a "Charles Manson look." This

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is all by way of making you feel at home in Bolinas on Wall Street; David won't mind if you sense some irony, too. To head you in that direction, he's singing the "Internationale" while saluting the Stock Exchange.

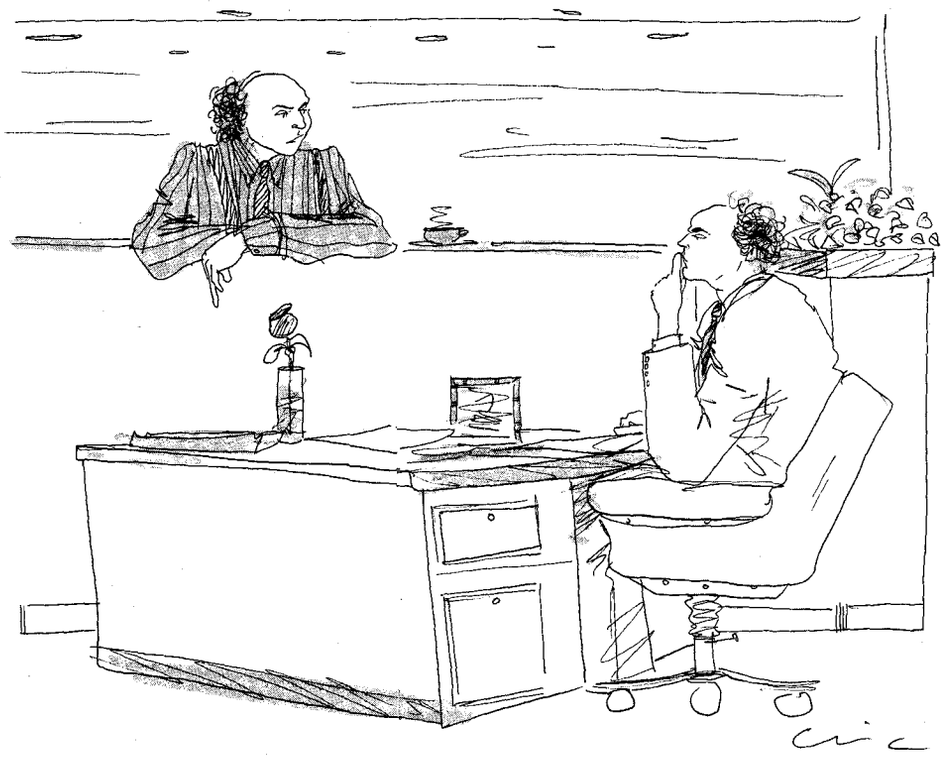
Now David is reading from the Bolinas Yellow Pages. It lists two regular doctors, twelve massage therapists, one shamanic counsellor, a plumber who also performs marriage ceremonies, and Arthur, a fêng-shui geomancer. (He'll exorcise an outhouse, if you like.) Next, David is reciting the use schedule for the new public pool in town: "Monday: Dog and cat swim. Tuesday: Men nude. Wednesday: Children nude. Thursday: Women nude. Friday: Women-and-men seniors nude."

Some of David's friends from Bolinas, who will remain nameless, have smuggled out to him copies of the Bolinas *Hearsay News*, and now he's reading aloud excerpts, among them a house ad saying that the *News* needs a refrigerator. ("It doesn't matter if it refrigerates or not just as long as the little light goes on," says the ad.) Here's a recent review by Arthur, the geomancer: "I sat through last Friday's performance piece and smiled from ear to ear all night long because I could sense the innate possibility of raw creativity ready to surprise us at any moment. That surprise never came but, hey, that is for the gods to lend, if and when they choose. We are just humans. Be gentle with each other."

We invited David to meet us for coffee, and one of the things he said to us was "If I'd stayed in Bolinas, my name would be Sunshine by now. All the people I know who stayed there changed their names. My friend Lydia, for example, changed her name legally to Molly. Then, a few years later, she changed it again—to Mali."

We went home and called someone we knew who had once lived in Bolinas, and she declined to be interviewed. "I'd hate to see my spiritual home reduced to a series of anecdotes," she said. Then, after a pause that seemed to contain an internal debate on the meaning of sharing, she added, "O.K. Here's one anecdote for you." It involved widespread U.F.O. sightings.

We started to wonder what it would be like to live in a place where the sixties aren't quaint—where they aren't, as in New York, just a source of nostalgia, or a theme for a night club, or an inspiration for a short-lived fashion revival. And then, in an issue of the *Hearsay News* that we had got hold of, we read that Bolinas had recently raised seven thousand dollars for the children of Iraq. We hadn't heard of any other towns' doing that. But, hey, such impulses are for the gods to lend, if and when they choose. We are just humans.



"What good is it to be the victor if the vanquished are no longer around?"

Hacks

POETRY is a random phenomenon, which can strike at any moment. It was raining the other evening, and as we were walking west along Forty-second Street these evocative lines spontaneously combusted inside us:

> You know, a cab
> Would sure be fab.

Waiting for the light at the corner of Sixth Avenue, we jumped back to avoid some heavy surf created by a bus plowing through a big puddle, and felt overwhelmed by a sense of alienation from the whole universe:

> Our expense account sure seems useless tonight,
> 'Cause there's not even one empty taxi in sight.

As we passed the Fun City Video Arcade and the Les Gals live revue, and began to feel the inevitable beckoning of the Seventh Avenue I.R.T., we became deeply pensive, almost philosophical:

> Well. Let's face it: this doggone rain
> Means we're going to have to take the train.

We rode the downtown local to Canal Street and then headed toward Greenwich Street. The rain was really coming down hard now, so we ducked into a doorway long enough to write in our notebook:

> Who says you have to be such a smart fella
> To remember to carry an umbrella?
> This is a complete soaking,
> And could lead to pneumonia and possibly croaking.

On Greenwich, we found the building we were looking for, rode the elevator to the second floor, and stepped into the lobby of the Castillo Cultural Center, home base for a collective of artists and political activists who, among other things, publish a newspaper, the *National Alliance*, dedicated to the notion that its star columnist, the Reverend Al Sharpton, deserves vastly more media exposure than he is now getting. To promote aesthetic diversity, the Castillo Center also rents theatre space to nice guys like Terence Gelber, who writes poetry under the pen name T. Butler Gelber but is Terry to all his friends. Terry greeted us and introduced us to

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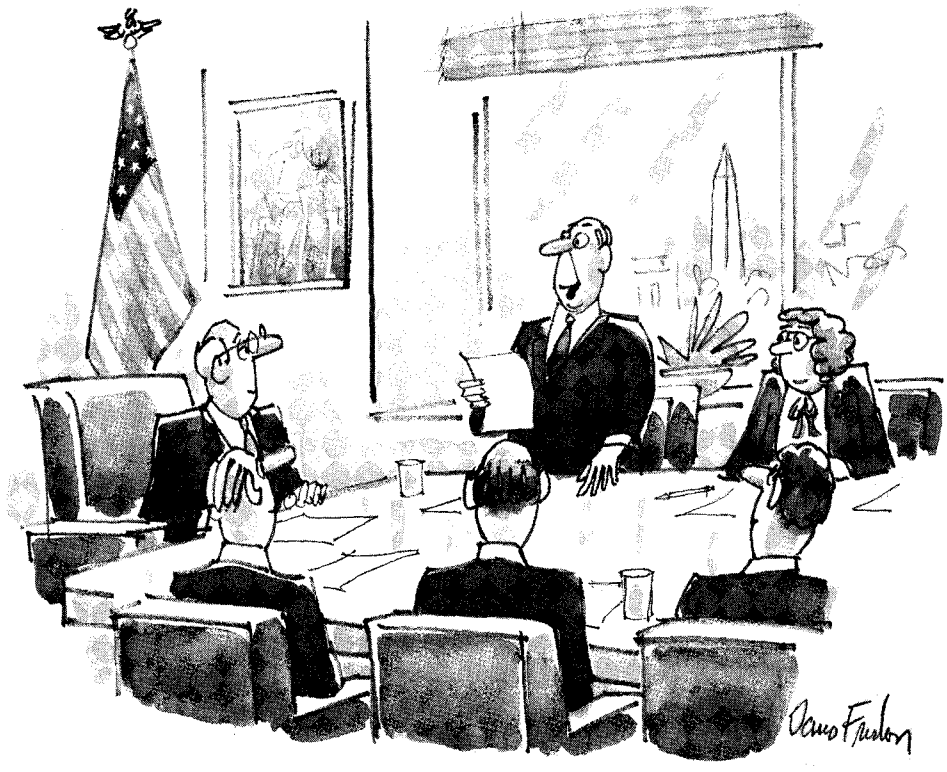

"I should like to propose a bonanza for the rich."

• •

his friend and fellow-poet Tom Ostrowski. Terry and Tom do not belong to the collective, but they do belong to that segment of the populace which tends not to have problems flagging down taxis when it rains, because they happen to be taxi-drivers themselves. They both work for the Rego Stan Maintenance Corporation, a fleet in Long Island City owned by a guy from Rego Park named Stanley, who, according to Tom, spends his working hours inside a cage, tells ethnic jokes non-stop, and "has a voice like a salami sandwich."

"Excellent simile," we told Tom.

It had been Terry's idea to put together an evening of "Hack Poetry at Castillo." Inside the theatre, he and Tom had just finished setting up chairs for sixty people, and they had also laid out a table of refreshments—Danish butter cookies, Oreos, Pepperidge Farm Milanos, Chocolate Schoolboy Wafers. Twenty minutes before the reading was to begin, however, no crowd had materialized.

"We've been major-league screwed," Terry said. "I just found out the trains are stopped because of the rain. My family, about ten people, are stuck out on Long Island. And I'm into this for about three hundred bucks. The cookies aren't that big a part of it—it's mainly rent and printing costs. I sent tickets to Koch, Dinkins, Robert De Niro, and State Senator Roy Goodman. Goodman I think'll show, because I got a call from a guy in his office who said he got the tickets. He mentioned a party of three."

Before Terry became a hack, he had a few other careers. "I've been driving for a year," he said. "My grandfather drove for fifty. I'm a paperhanger by trade, but business is slow, so I started doing this. When do I write? Usually in the early morning. Very rarely while I'm driving. I was in the bar business for eight years. I owned four bars on Long Island. I was a carnival barker for seven or eight years, on and off. Three years ago, I started taking acting classes. As far as the poetry goes, I have no intention of making money at this. You've got to be dead a hundred years before you can make any money—that I know."

We asked Tom how long he'd been driving a cab.

"One year and eight days," he said. "I'm not sure how many hours."

A young couple who were quite possibly in love showed up. She wore a black lace tunic and black cowboy boots and had long, wavy dark hair—unmistakable tipoffs that she was a poet. She said, "Hack poetry? I saw the ad in the *Village Voice*."

"All right!" said Terry, delighted to meet a ticket-holder he did not happen to know personally.

A friend of Tom's arrived, and said, "How you doing?"

"I'm scared out of my mind," Tom told him.

"Just don't puke," the friend said.

"What do you mean, just don't puke?" Tom said. "That's part of the act."

When the reading began, about a dozen people were in the audience, including a reporter for the *National Alliance*, who enhanced the pan-cultural ambience by sitting a couple of rows behind us and slowly eating some highly aromatic shrimp lo mein. Terry and Tom took chairs on a low riser in the center of the room, and Terry said, "We're the hack poets, and tonight you've hailed us." He read his first poem, which, like all his poems, employed rhyming couplets ("haste" and "waste," "ghettos" and "meadows," "above" and "love," "pray" and "Beaujolais") to explore the themes of romantic longing and of angst. After Tom read his first poem, which, like almost all his poems, was in blank verse, Terry said, "That was short and pretty sweet. Maybe you've got something with a little more meat."

During a segment identified on the printed program as "The Political Hack," Tom gave what seemed a deeply felt reading of a poem titled "Big Stupid Obnoxious Power Pig." "I wrote that when I got thrown in jail for not paying a speeding ticket," he said. "It's a little angry."

Each poet read nine of his own poems, plus a favorite poem by another writer—Poe's "The Bells" (Tom) and Kipling's "If" (Terry)—and along the way they asked each other leading questions. One, from Terry, was "Have you ever had any celebrities in your cab?"

Tom said he'd once picked up Tony Bennett "but I called him Tony Curtis." Then he read a poem about how to get big tips by telling riders that the previous passenger was Mick Jagger. "How about you?" he asked Terry. "Any celebrities?"

"Robert De Niro."

"Robert De Niro? How'd you get him in your cab?"

"I parked in front of his house until he came out."

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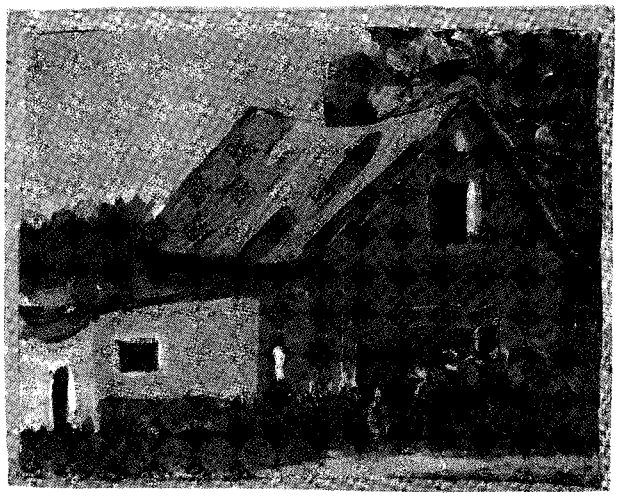
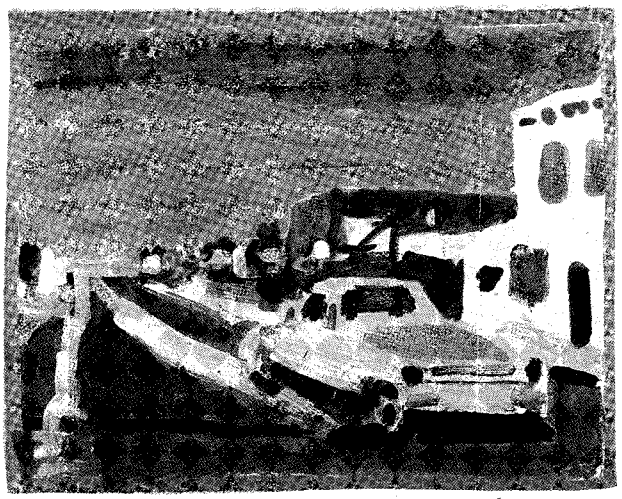
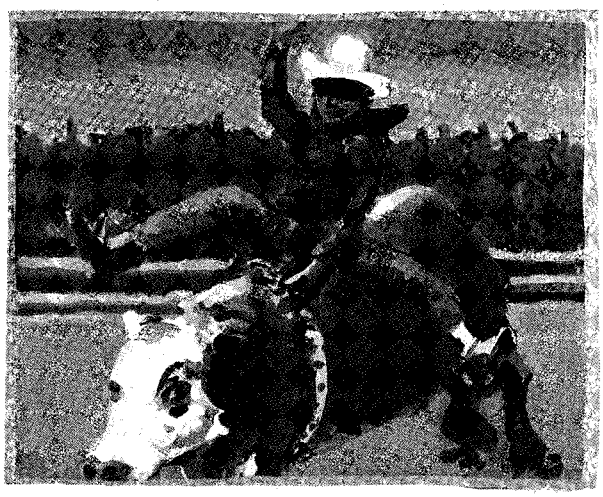
Summer Visitors



We have this modest little farmhouse upstate.

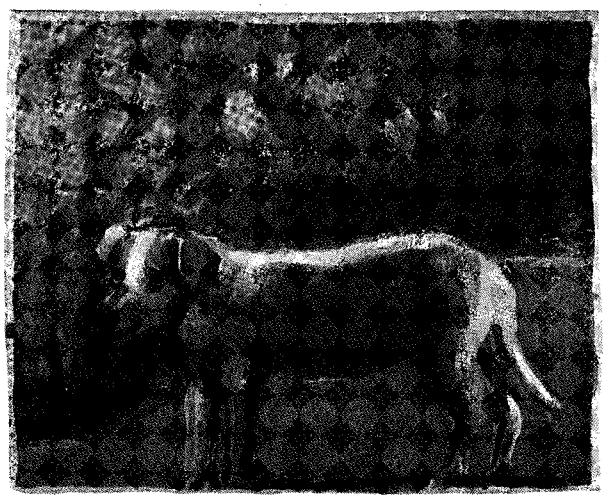


I don't know why, but all sorts of famous people keep driving up to see us.



When John Wayne dropped in, he insisted on riding our neighbor's cow, Nettie.

A French delegation scoured field and forest, but couldn't find a single truffle for their picnic.



Lassie couldn't come, but she sent her boyfriend, Fritz, who ate a whole rib roast.

Augusta Marsh

After Thoreau's visit, we finally did what we should have done all along: we started a compost heap.

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THE AFTERNOON OF JUNE 8, 1991

Those who adopt satanism come from all walks of life. . . . They include doctors, lawyers, professors, university presidents. —*The magazine Insight.*

HELLO and welcome—is this on?—hello and welcome to the ssbt sbt zzzzbt alumni and friends of Brainard *bzzzt* Brainard University, zzzbt and to all the wheeee ZZZZZZZZZ families of the class of '91. And to all of you new graduates ZZZZZZZZZ ZAAA ZAAA AZAZEL AZAZEL ZZZzzzzb sitting down front in your elegant black caps and gowns, let me add—you made it! Ssssbt zzzzbt zzzeeee b'zeee b'zeee zzzZAMIEL this rain holds off awhile so we don't have to move the ceremony into the gym. *Wheeeeee Moloch, Moloch, serve him* a special welcome to all the faculty emeriti—it's good to have you back—nnnnnNERGAL BELIAL LAL-LAL-LAL also to the fiftieth anniversary class of '41. Your special reunion drive raised enough non-earmarked zzzzzzzZZZZ sssssss SSSSSSAMMAEL SCRATCH SCRATCH funds for us to add some badly needed phet phet phet TOPHET phet phet to our physical plant. Many thanks from the entire Brainard University family.

-ily-ly-ly-ly eeeeeeee rely here at Brainard on the generosity of individual and corporate contributors sssssssSERPENT AHRIMANESssssss THAMUZzzzzzzz offset an alarming thirty-two-per-cent increase in costs *bbbbbbbeeeelzebubbbbbb* unfortunately, a projected shortfall of almost three million dollars. Your loyal support, which has had an enormous impact on our success, bab bab bab BAB BAB ABADDON enhance the quality of the learning experience at Brainard. Wheeeeeee wheeee eeeeee Old Nick Nick Nick a sombre note on this festive occasion, but in the face of unrelenting financial pressures bbbbbbbheeeee beasthood beasthood before the end of the fiscal year on June 30th.

Now for the good news. rrrrrr RRRRRRROOOOOAAAAARRRRRRrrrr HOW-OW-OW-WOW-WOW-WOWrrrrrr rrrrrOW rrrrrrrrOW rrrrRAHAB RAHAB BAB BAB BAAL BAALIM BAALBERITH rrrrRRROARRRrrrr awarded summa cum laude. OW OW OW POWERS-OF-THE-AIR magna cum laude, and nearly two hundred receiving the lesser but still very commendable degree of cum laude. In addition, we point with pride to the impressive number of graduates who will be receiving stipendiary hummm hummm hummmMMMMMMMM-MMELCHOM RIMMON ASMODEUS APOLLYON CHEMOSH, ROBHES-THE-DOOR-DEMONNNNNNNNNNNNNN nearly half again as many as any university in the area. Again, ooooooooo eeeeeeeeee *Shedim Ahriman Euronymous Erl-King swarming, swarming,* many prestigious scholars in our tenured and non-tenured faculty.

[Takes drink of water.]

Bzip bzeeeeeeeeeee bzeeeeeeeeeeee *Beasssssst-Massssssster Beasssssst-Massssssster* generous bequest of Mr. and Mrs. Harry E. WAAAAAHHHHEEE MAW-WORM expansion of our media center and film department, construction to begin this hhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh. The reHHHOOOOOOOVESssss ZZZZZZZZZ, a matching grant from our friends at Electric Boat. Let's give them a round of rrreeeee-rrrrreeeee-reeee *eeeEEEEEE* EREBUS RHADAMANTHUS PRINCE-OF-DARKNESS HORNED-ONE UHN UHN UHN nnnnnn round of applause. We couldn't do it without you.

[Bubbling hellmouth opens in earth in front of podium, then closes.]

As I'm sure we all know only too well, the price of a college education HORROR THE HORROR-ROR-ROR-ROR over the last twenty years zzzz b'zzzzzzzzz b'zzzzzzzzz regrettable b'zzzzzzz *Pazuzu-Prince-of-Locustssss,* and will for the foreseeable future. Student tuitions actually cover only The-Insect-Inside-You-That-Wants-To-LIVE! which amounts to less than two-fifths of the actual sbt sbeeeee sbeee Baron SAMEDI-eeeeeeeee of every diploma awarded today. And of that two-fifths

[Deafening crack, as lightning hits overhead. Smell of sulfur.]

in long-term, interest-deferred federal tuition loans. Given the critical nature of the need, we have begun two highly lauded funding outreach programs. I wish I had more answers during this difficult ffffffffffffff Mephisto ffffffft ft pht Astaroth pht ffffffff

[Whirlwind touches down in center aisle. Sparks from p.a. system.]

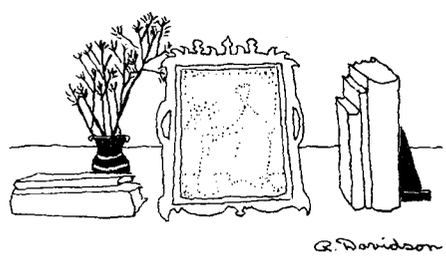
introduce our commencement speaker, Dr. Howard Hall. Born in Springfield, Dr. Hall made his first dollar as a child of six, when he convinced a playmate to purchase a toy he had made. After attending the public schools he matriculated at Brainard where

[Is skewered to floor by religious symbol falling from steeple of school chapel nearby. Prizes self loose, gets up.]

and went on to earn his Master's at CH-CH-CH-CHORONZON BLACK-RIDER and soon BEHEMOTH BELPHEGOR president of his own SEMJAZA BERALD BARALAMENSIS ADRAMMELECH-eck-eck private listings to realtors. BAL-BAL-BALDACHIENSIS PAUMACHIE APOLOROSEDES unaffected by the crash, luckily, ITEMON GENIO LUCIFUGE NAAMAHHHHHH after whom Hall Quadrangle is named. Please join me in giving him a nice

[Explodes into smoke.]

—IAN FRAZIER



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Modest Ida became famous with a rescue in 1869 when she set out in a wild storm to aid two men she heard crying for help—Sergeant Adams and Private McLaughlin from Fort Adams whose boat had upset in a sudden squall.

This was indeed a difficult case. Wives threatened to swamp her boat, but she managed to save them.—*New London (Conn.) Day.*

Wives like to see nature take its course.

•

WORDS OF ONE SYLLABLE DEPT.

[*From the Seattle Times*]

The city ordinance also requires developers to notify future home buyers of site conditions. Homeowners must buy some type of landslide insurance for the first 10 years of the house's existence.

However, homeowners are having a tough time getting landslide insurance this year, Snyder said.

That's because courts in California have made insurance companies pay for damage caused by landslides, he said.

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JOURNALS

FROM THE SEVENTIES AND EARLY EIGHTIES—II

SO, Easter morning. Mary is sick. I wake early, feed the dogs, and drink coffee. That this is Easter morning is very clear to me, as it was when I was a child. Put that in your pipe and smoke it. Driving over the hill past St. Augustine's, I think the experience is absolute. Christ is risen, and it all follows—the eggs for fertility, even the candy rabbit. I am deeply moved. My eyes are filled with tears. I am late for Mass. The altar, dark last Sunday, is filled with light, and during the climax of the ceremony I cry. It is not possible for me to diagnose religious experience. I say my prayers beside a woman dressed in white, a dental technician, or nurse. A man leads a cripple—a spastic, I think—to the altar. I think, sentimentally, perhaps, how glorious to be taken to the fire in defense of this faith. And I also think that the ecumenical church, with no fires at all, is progress.

•

Cutting the field in the middle of the afternoon in order to plant a cherry tree, I feel how profoundly important such work is to me. Then I recall, by chance, my mother's drinking herself to death, and think of her as uncommonly clear and strong. It is at about this time that my brother dies. A. calls later. I cry. He seems, as most people I love have seemed, to be lost, to be suffering a loneliness more painful than anything experienced in life. I read the prayer book, but—other than that God will not be a stranger—the descriptions of life everlasting are not what I have in mind. The next day my sorrow seems visceral. Susie and Ben are here. Ben does seem estranged. Susie and I talk about the family. I am inclined to make a legend of the Cheevers, and this can easily be done, but it seems idle to me. I will write a eulogy, including the fact that my brother wasted half his life. Susie throws some light on our intractability—my swiping a cigarette and Fred's cleaning his fingernails with a fruit knife. We seem to have got the provincial eccentricities of New England, but we seem to have got them wrong. This seems unimportant. I am late for church and am very heavy-spirited until I drink a great deal of coffee.

Coming in late to Communion, I see what someone else—my son, for example—might see: a homely building of common granite, with an archer's parapet and a clock that has lost its hands, built with the wealth of the 1870s when the village was a lively river port. Now impoverished and in debt, barely kept together by the hands of the faithful, the church might seem to a young man no more than a husk, lacking even the distinction of ugliness and ruin. Built to accommodate hundreds, it has, on this and almost every other morning, perhaps a dozen communicants. The priest, from some African country and trained in an English seminary, is wearing heavily embroidered vestments inherited from his predecessor; he reads the Epistle and the Gospel in such a distorted accent that almost nothing can be understood. The young man would observe that he could not pump gas, sell appliances, or even weed a garden, and so the young man might observe that the priest's choice of becoming God's advocate was a position of retreat. The carpet is, of course, worn; the colored windows are flashy and vulgar; and the black cleaning woman plays a very modest tune on the organ. The words spoken by the priest and the responses from the rest of us would make no sense at all to the young man. This is a cardhouse, a silly game for children who are much too old for such games, a threadbare display of provincial wealth and absence of taste. But to me this is the climax of the week.

I had not, because it reminded me of a movie from the forties, planned to report this, but this is what happened. Early in the service I hear, in the distance, the sound of trumpets. This sort of thing has never disconcerted me. Then, as the ceremony continues, I hear below the trumpets the commanding beat of drums. It is the fire-department band, practicing for tomorrow's parade. The music is quite distinct—they must be at the crest of the hill when we make the general confession—and as they come down the hill the trumpets and the drums fill the church, and when we exclaim "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts: Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory" not a word can be heard. The win-

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dows rattle as the band comes by. Then, in the front pew, an old spinster, a spare relic of the past of the village and of the church, turns to the rest of the congregation to express her feelings at having the word of God obscured by the fire department. She is laughing.

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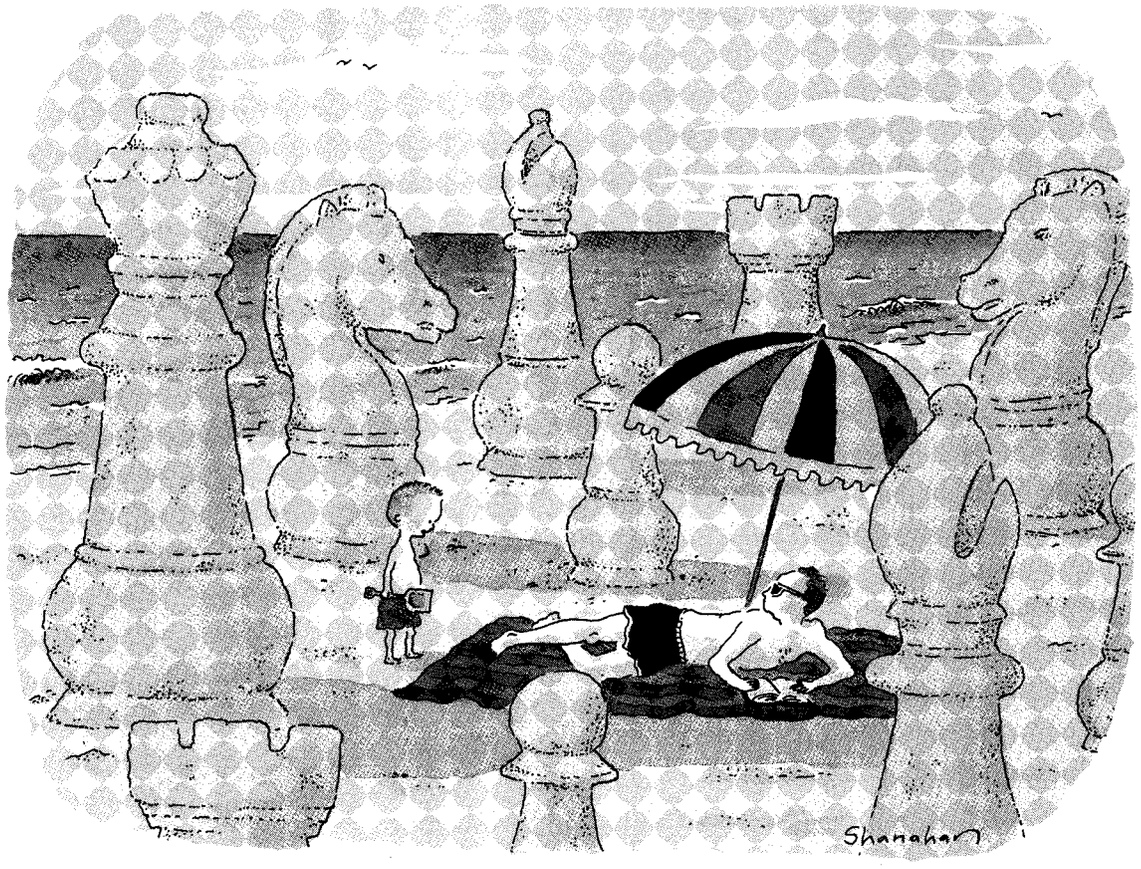
The telephone rings at four. "This is CBC. John Updike has been in a fatal automobile accident. Do you care to comment?" I am crying. I cannot sleep again. I think of joining Mary in bed, but I am afraid she will send me away. I think I am right. When there is a little light I feed the dogs. "I hope they don't expect to be fed this early every morning," she says. I do not point out that John will not die every morning, and that in any case it is I who feed them. This restraint costs me nothing. When I go into the kitchen for another cup of coffee she empties the pot into my cup and says, "I was just about to have some myself." When I insist on sharing the coffee I am unsuccessful. I do not say that the pain of death is nothing compared to the pain of sharing a coffeepot with a peevish woman. This, again, costs me nothing. And I see that what she seeks, much more than a cup of coffee, is the gratification of a sense of denial and neglect—and that we so often, all of us, put our cranky and emotional demands so far ahead of our hunger and thirst.



"Checkmate!"

• •

As for John, he was a man I so esteemed as a colleague and so loved as a friend that his loss is indescribable. He was a prince. I think it not difficult to kiss him goodbye—I can think of no other way of parting from him, although he would, in my case, have been embarrassed. I think him peerless as a writer of his generation; and his gift of communicating—to millions of strangers—his most exalted and desperate emotions was fortified by immense and uncommon intelligence and erudition. John, quite alone in the field of aesthetics, remained shrewd. Mercifully, there is no consolation in thinking that his extraordinary brilliance presaged a cruel, untimely, and unnatural death. His common sense would have dismissed that as repulsive and vulgar. One misses his brightness—one misses it painfully—but one remembers that his life was dedicated to the description of enduring—and I definitely do not mean immortal—strains of sensuality and spiritual revelation.

So the call about John's untimely death was a fraud. I have decided, says my daughter, that it was an overambitious stringer, who saw the name on a police blotter and tried to cash in. This is a wish founded on the desirable simplicity of being charitable; one of her best characteristics. I am distempered, forlorn, and idle.

•

My most frequent thought, during the funeral of my brother, is that my thinking is superficial. Any tears I shed are facile. The architecture of the early-eighteenth-century church is splendid. The smell in the vestibule of wood, the heat, and some salt from the nearby sea is, I think, unique to this part of the world and unlocks my memory. The high arched windows with their many lights must make it a cruel place to worship in the winter, but on this splendid summer day they make of the building a frame for the trees and the sky. I do not miss my brother at all. I think that he, with my mother, regarded death as no mystery at all. Life had been mysterious and thrilling, I often heard them say, but death was of no consequence. Some clinician would say that, while I part so easily with my brother, I will, for the rest of my life, seek in other men the love he gave to me.

•

Approaching the fortieth year of my life, I had published well over a hundred short stories that expressed my feeling of life as intense and profoundly broken encounters. I then had two children and was into the fifteenth

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year of my marriage and hoped, in my first novel, to celebrate a sustained relationship over a long passage of time. I had not lived in New England for more than a decade, and the past of my family, beginning with the seventeenth century, appeared to me with some perspective. The pattern of my life during the year in which the "Chronicle" was completed was thought, in the Iron Curtain countries and by my daughter's generation, to be a bitter irony, a response I never quite understood.

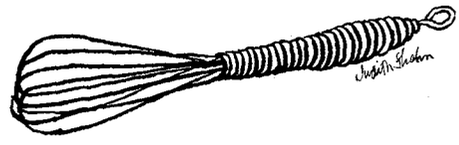
I worked four days a week on the "Chronicle," with intense happiness. On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, I had a course in advanced composition at Barnard College. My weekends went roughly like this. On Saturday mornings, I played touch football until the noon whistle blew, when I drank Martinis for an hour or so with friends. On Saturday afternoons, I played Baroque music on the piano or recorder with an ensemble group. On Saturday nights, my wife and I either entertained or were entertained by friends. Eight o'clock Sunday morning found me at the Communion rail, and the Sunday passed pleasantly, according to the season, in skiing, scrub hockey, swimming, football, or backgammon. This sport was occasionally interrupted by the fact that I drove the old Mack engine for the volunteer fire department and also bred black Labrador retrievers. As I approached the close of the novel, there were, in my workroom, eight Labrador puppies, and on my desk the Barnard themes, the fire-department correspondence, "The Wapshot Chronicle," and a correspondence with both the American and the British Kennel Clubs, since the litter had been sired by an English dog. Any account of these months is thought in Russia to be the hilarious account of a capitalist trying to forget the tragedy of his way of life. Nothing could be further from the truth. My happiness was immense, and I trust that the book will, in some ways, be a reminder of this.

•

The strain of waiting for the publication, I mean the reception, of "Falconer," and the lack of interest of Paramount and the Book-of-the-Month Club, is not too difficult to bear, but it is, nonetheless, a strain. So the most you can do is fill in the time.

•

It will be close to three years since I have enjoyed any naked, sexual engorgement. This is a painful handicap. Getting into my car after a shower of rain and feeling the wet seat on the skin of my buttocks reminds me of the ecstasies of the skin. The last, I guess, was an Irish girl whose name I can't recall. She was about twenty, and dropping her clothes, asked if I had ever seen anything so beautiful. I never had. It would not last, she added; her breasts were not as firm as they had been last year—and there was no true sadness in her observation. There was no sadness at all in our night together. She telephoned, not long ago. Thinking about Bennington and now about Ithaca, I thought, I think, in terms of the appearance of some lover who will undo me, engorge me, and grant me



MAKERS OF LABYRINTHS

I must be absolutely alone when I think,
And on the highest parapet
Overlooking the empty street.
The dusty store window down below
Is full of phantoms at sunset.

There goes my old man. He is already the age I am now.
With eyes closed
He calls the waiters by their secret names:
St. Isaac, the Syrian,
St. Nilus, who wrote on prayer.
The wine of eternal ambiguities,
If you please, to the health of the crow
Sitting on the top of a white church.

His life, too, is a fantastic maze.
Our misfortunes are builders.
They always forget about windows,
Make the ceilings low and heavy.
"It's only a paper moon," they sing . . .
But I'm getting ahead of myself.

At the end of a dark corridor,
There is a lit match in a trembling hand.
"I still have stagefright,"
The beautiful woman says,
And then she leads us past wardrobes
With mirrors and creaking doors
Where whispering dresses hang,
Whispering corsets, button shoes—
The kind you'd wear while riding a goat.

Her daughter, we are told, is consumptive.
There's a sign of death's greasy thumbprint
On her angelic face.
She wants me to play under the table
Of the silent cardplayers.

We play, and it's like the palace at Knossos.
Memory, my heart's only match:
Her hand guiding me in the ruins,
And the cards whispering over our heads
Made giddy by our youth and our love.

—Charles Simic

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a contentment I have nearly forgotten. But after a month or so the sorrow sets in.

•

I am depressed for two days—a loss of vitality, perhaps sickness. It is difficult to grasp. It is very cold, and when I am in this humor my memories of cold are vivid. There was the cold of the farm in Hanover where Fred and I gave up hugging the fire and began to drink whiskey. I remember the hired man's toilet, the wooden seat gleaming with frost. I remember the cold of the furnished rooms I lived in in New York. My unease in the cold comes naturally. I buy sand at the lumberyard and sand the driveway. The cold and the movement please me, but as the afternoon wanes the cold intensifies, and I am tired and uneasy. I sleep and wake and feel fine.

"Don't say a word! Your eyes, your hair, your T-shirt, your luggage—they say it all."

• •

•

After—on this shadowy winter morning—a string of harmless negatives, Mary closes with, "Well, you've never read any of his poetry." "I've read more than you," say I. So silence settles over the house and may not be relieved for a day or two. I feel poorly. Yesterday I skated. There are two rough places on the ice that will trip me up, and I worry about these in the middle of the night. I look into the woods for some signs of vitality, and all I find are the clusters of cones on the hemlock. Soon, I think, it will all be a blaze of color, first the dogwood, then the azalea—unpopular with me—then the greenness. I think of summer in terms of sexual discharges and iced gin. The last is impossible, and erotic playmates are not too easy to come by these days. I think that in a sexual discharge the genes and chromosomes are swiftly replenished, but the spiritual commitment is much more lasting.

•

I am galled at my lack of physical bulk and galled that this should concern me. There is really little evidence of this in all the photographs I have, but I fear being taken for an elderly bosun's mate, that gentle clerk in the hardware store who knows the whereabouts of all the nails, the rifle-company typist, the small museum guard in a worn uniform who says softly, "It is beautiful, isn't it?" I think of myself in West Berlin, toastmaster at our maid's wedding—bang-bang, a dynamic, lambent flame. So, having no bulk, one counts on spirit. I skate, shovel the snow, and think that I see in some unidentified tree a trace of greenness and lightness. This seems to be what I've been looking for. But on the dark or mysterious end of things I imagine, when I lie down for my nap, that I hold in my arms some unsuitable lover.

•

Waiting for another photographer and interviewer, I operate at a thoughtless level. Phil Roth calls to say that he received "Falconer," and would I give him John Updike's address. The rivalry among novelists is quite as intense as that among sopranos.

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In the long psychoanalytical conversation we have been having, it seems to me that we might discuss the importance of our beginnings. To conceive a child, my father told me, is as simple as blowing a feather off your knee. He may have been speaking of my chance conception. Conception also, as we know, can be the consummation of a passionate and ecstatic response to life. A child demands love, which is easily given under most circumstances; rudimentary care, such as food and clothing; and, in a society with few conspicuous traditions, some broad instruction in good and evil. One's opportunities are not boundless, but they are not, I think, bounded by the sticks and stones of our beginnings. The most rudimentary genetic construction gives us a chance to improve on Great-Uncle Ebenezer's career as an inventor, or to continue the career as a concert pianist that was so suddenly ended by Cousin Louisa's influenza. In our countenances we find a diversity, a richness, and a promise that may be impeded but is surely not crushed by the fact that Grandmother was an exhibitionist. "I think," I tell Susie, "of the richness you and your brothers have brought into this house."

•

Up from the meadows, up from the fields of corn, up from the deepest strata of my consciousness, swims my

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girl, my left knee in her crotch. In the higher strata, closer to waking, the others loiter, and while they may pick my pockets and do other things, I think no lasting damage to either of us will be done. "I wish you were here," said H. "We could have gone to the Degas show, and I have fresh shad and asparagus." Lying naked on that broad bed, I would have been very happy. But I do remember that the apartment is a sublet—I see, past the theatrical draperies at the window, the walls and windows of another apartment, and I am keenly aware of the fact that I am sixty-five. I do not seem to miss my youth. There is nothing so graceful as that. My youth seems taken from me. Then M. calls and will call again tonight. And I truly feel that there will be no darkness in this friendship. There is a membrane, a caul of darkness, that I think I recognize in homosexuals, and I think this is not our destiny. There will be in my life pain and grief, I know, but I think there will be no waywardness. That there might be a sexual consummation here seems likely, but it seems no more than a stone in our way.

•

So, you wake at half past six with the mounting hots, and by ten o'clock you could, like a riggish cat, mount a stuffed jaguar or fuck a rusty doorknob. This builds until half past twelve, when company and lunch have a soothing influence. You drive into the village to get some milk, and the sight of the village, the stab at orderliness with which the buildings are grouped, the thoughtful look in a young woman's face as she leads her children across the street seem to be the manifest beauty we hope to achieve. Then one is engorged with melancholy—slightly relieved by a dozen pigeons taking off from the roof of an old building. The day is hostile. The sky is gray, a discouragement, but the gray light is strong.

•

I endure, am forced into, and triumph over exhaustive carnal speculations and fantasies. I feel no guilt. When I announce that I have weeded the upper garden, Mary exclaims over the fact that I must have destroyed her bed of herbs. There is nothing very wrong about this, nor is there anything lovable in her frame of mind. The company of my son does strengthen my position. When a woman exclaims bitterly, "And now, I suppose, I must cook dinner," the force of the remark is plaintive. How slender is her sense of usefulness. But this is not one's first response. I seem to be approaching a great crisis in my life, some ampule perhaps of death, and yet I am convinced that a flood of light will save us both.

•

The holiday parties we go to might be described as provincial. This would be adequate but not truthful. We go on the night of the Fourth to see the fireworks at the club, something I first did perhaps twenty-five years ago. It is a pleasure to see so much of my life. The vast Palladian façade, built on the bones of murdered workers, and the men and women spread over the lawn are thought to be a show of wealth and privilege (although my friends from prison would say that it ain't got no class) and I remember, unwillingly, the villa of a papal duchess. But here is the grass, the crowd, the twilight, and the terrible dance band playing "When the Red, Red Robin." One has heard the same dreary music for so long that one would expect the players to be infirm, but they are youthful, and so what one encounters is enduring vulgarity. The buffet supper is over. The light is dimming. The band begins to struggle with "The Star-Spangled Banner," and very, very slowly the diners get off their chairs and onto their terribly expensive shoes. A little flag, constructed of fire, is ignited. Its sputtering can be heard, and one section of a crimson stripe falls to the grass. There is some applause, some cowboy hoots, and then, with a half-dozen mortared detonations high in the air, the show begins.

I watch the man, barely visible in the darkness, who ignites the mortars with a flare and then runs like hell. There is some enormous universality and excitement in the way he lights a fuse and takes off. This is youth; this is the excitement of a summer night; this is mischief; this, in fact, is sin. This is also my partiality to a rudimentary participation.

I canoe on the Main and in the canals of Amsterdam and Venice. I get to know the quality of the water, the distances in terms of strength, and enjoy the privileges of a bystander.

The fireworks are mortars and set pieces. They seem quite traditional. There is the French school:

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pale colors that arc at the zenith and give, for half a second, the illusion of a rotunda. There are the Neapolitan extravagances of red and green, and the phosphorus waterfalls. We sigh like lovers at the fire, applaud the fire, estimate the cost of the fire. We are charmed by the fire. "Mother can't find her largest diamond," says a young woman. Her "a" is improbably broad. It would excite the suspicions of a busboy. "What do you think someone from a place like Russia would think about this?" a young man asks. Oho. I remember my old-fashioned friends who used to call across theatre lobbies remarks such as "Lisbon was divine, but the King has laryngitis." So the last chain of mortars jars our eardrums, fills heaven with fire, and we go back to the exclusive parking lot.

•

I read some stories of mine. Their preciseness galls me; I seem always to be plugging at small targets. I hit them all right, but why don't you get the 12-gauge double-barrel and go after bigger game? And the lack of genuine climax galls me, too. I have been racked by a big orgasm as often as there are stars in heaven, but I don't seem to get this down. However, I think the stories an accomplishment.

•

So my hours of happiest comprehension seem limited. They are roughly from six to eight in the morning, and it is now half past nine. For reasons, perhaps, of decorum, comprehension, or dishonesty I recast my dilemma in the light of those days when my brother left for Germany and I lay on the sofa crying for him. The sofa was a ridged, Victorian piece of furniture constructed for straight-backed callers taking a cup of tea. This I remember vividly. I wept for a love that could only bring me misery and narrowness and denial; and how passionately I wept. And so I weep again (not really), and go out for dinner looking, really, for nothing but company and warm food.

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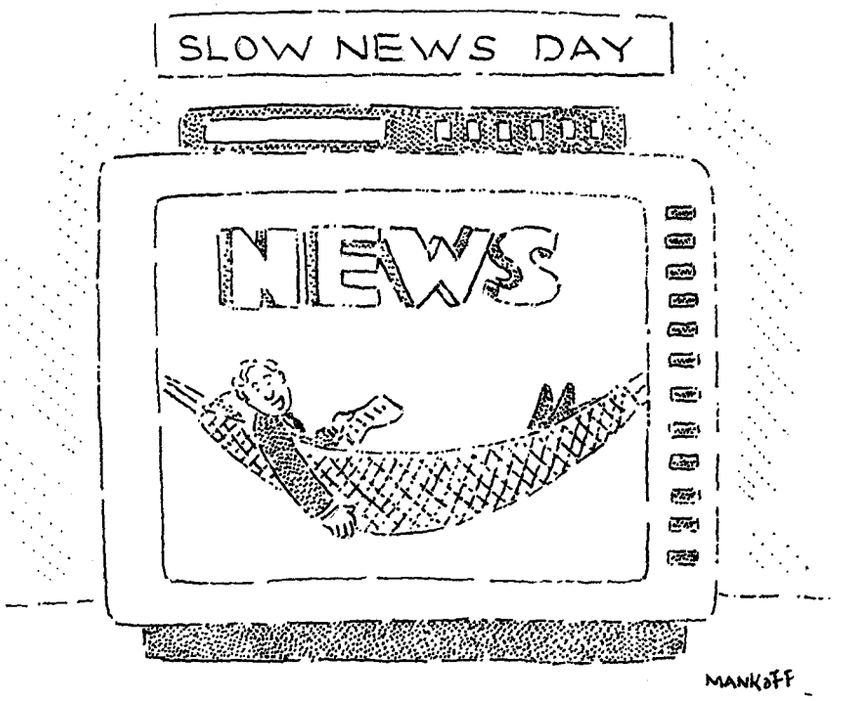
A new journal, and since more than half of the last novel was encompassed in the last journal I hope that something will be accomplished when I complete this. Alone, and much less lonely (I claim) than I am with my



"Oh, hi."

• •

wife, I eat sketchily and the first thing I think of when I wake is that I must have lost weight. I will weigh myself. By a loss of weight I mean that I will have recouped some of that youthful beauty I never possessed, that I will be kissed and caressed and worshipped. I see how far all of this is from the realm of common sense. Anyone who caressed and worshipped this old carcass would be someone upon whose loneliness, fear, and ignorance I preyed. This would be the exploitation of innocence. This I see as I swim so briefly through that part of the stream that represents common sense. I will get into other, more seductive, waters, but there is always the chance that I will return to this.

•

The beauty of girls seems to have dimmed for me, and the truth is that I no longer have the kind of bone that is needed. This, I trust, will pass, since I have a bone in the mornings. But am I growing old, and should I accommodate myself to this? When does one's spirit yield to one's chemistry? The last time I scuffled with a woman the lingering perfume on my skin and my clothes lasted for three marvellous hours, and I remember the skein of L.'s hair across my face. But there is at corners, waiting for traffic lights, the sense that the time has come to part with all of this. Is this supine; is this less than courageous? Will I be content with one-night, one-hour stands, really, when, after I have come, I wonder why they don't get dressed and go away?

•

So, as an unnatural and undeservedly lonely man, I go to the diner for supper. The waitresses are all meant for us, and I love them. Bringing me bread and butter and a glass of ice water, she is like the dove bringing a green branch to the ark. I hear a couple behind me. "All you want to do," says the man, "is to pick a fight. Whatever I say, you'll use it as a springboard for a fight. If I order celery and olives you'll pick a fight over that." He seems to have got all my wife's lines, and, remembering them, I think them perverted and unnatural. They are quite insane. I have never, I think, thought of my wife with more finality.

•

This is truly the worst kind of day the Hudson Valley can produce. Its Precambrian memories are refreshed, and the vines, some of the earliest in botanical history, grow with great rapidity. The light is melancholy, the air is lethal, everything one touches is wet,

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and I, of course, am lonely. Yesterday, doing what the Boy Scout Handbook forbade, I observed that my imaginary partners are chosen not for reasons of sentiment but for their obscene expertise. Mary calls and seems both friendly and intelligent, and I glimpse the landscape of my marriage as a fertile and well-lighted place, where I can be malicious and untruthful. This does not last for long. The chairs and tables all speak in complaining, embittered, and hateful voices. "How long," the stove asks me, "has it been since you have heard in this room a clear and loving voice?" It was twelve years ago, on the night when I first returned from Russia. "My mother wanted me to be a boy," she cried, and let me hold her passionately.

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This is a splendid sea. I play backgammon with a young man for most of the afternoon and come out two games behind. Into the village I drive, to A.A., which helps immensely and where I think I see two gays sitting in the corner. I think I am completely mistaken and that the fault is mine. A woman confesses to her sins. She weighed 280 pounds; she couldn't climb a flight of stairs; she couldn't drive; she couldn't do anything but drink, and even that was difficult because she would vomit most of the first bottle. I think of my mother at Christian Science testimonial meetings, confessing to having been so enchained by the flesh that a cancer was destroying her. And so we say the same; our confessions all deal with self-destruction and love. Look away from the body into truth and light! We find, in these church basements, a universality that cuts like the blade of a guillotine through the customs we have created in order to live peaceably. Here, on our folding chairs, we talk quite nakedly about endings and beginnings. When I leave the church the village has the charm, eclipsed for me, of a restoration or a stage set. The nostalgia is openly false. The beauty of the architecture is striking and splendidly preserved, but the clash of a whale-oil port is nowhere; and how absurd to look for it. This is a place for vacationers, mildly in search of a quaint past and a nice answer.

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This is the sort of seaside hotel about which people used to write romances; here one met the lady with the dog, here old Aschenbach came in his woolly underpants, watching a youth sport in the sea.

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I seem to be married no more. Mary is charmed by the simples of the Atlantic—its iconography, which is truly the iconography of birth—and she walks up and down the shore and covers the windowsill with shells and stones that have a spectrum of great delicacy and beauty. She comes to the breakfast table with thistles and beach-plum sprays, bayberries and other wild and delicate specimens evolved by the prevailing southwesterlies, and while she is charmed and charming, I am moved mostly by a sense of parting.

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The runt, the vagrant, in the pew ahead of me in church. I notice first the unwashed, uncut, uncombed brown hair partially concealing tipped ears that someone would describe as elfin. The pallor is Polish, I think, never having been near Poland. From the cowlick one can anticipate every thread of his clothing, either lifted from some bin in a charitable bureaucracy or bought in some back-street, downhill, cut-rate army-navy store. The north-woods-lumberman's jacket is colorless and seems made of bad, thin air. There is no point in holding up for scrutiny the sketchy wash trousers and the wet sneakers with their knotted laces. "You are twenty-three? Twenty-four?" you might ask. "I'm thirty-five," he will say. "I know I look young." What he means to say is that he looks undernourished and immature, and when he stands for the Gloria he has the posture of someone waiting in line for a handout. He is waiting in line. He will always seem to be waiting in line. Utterly alone, picked up by your headlights at dusk standing on the road shoulders of Route One Million, possessing nothing but his clothes and maybe three dollars, he will seem to be standing in line. But he is on his feet for the Gloria, drops loudly to his knees at the first hint of prayer. Where did he learn his High Church ground rules? He is, I conclude, imitating the woman ahead of him until I see him slide into base seconds ahead of her when we switch from the Epistle to the Gospel. So he learned them in line, I conclude, learned them in some church orphanage, where you lined up for the Holy Eucharist before you lined up for the boiled egg and the day-old bread. He leaves the church ahead of me, and the priest asks, "You've been away?" "Yar," he says. Then he turns to me, very brightly, and says "*Hi!*" I can't imagine where

"A working haircut. And you?"

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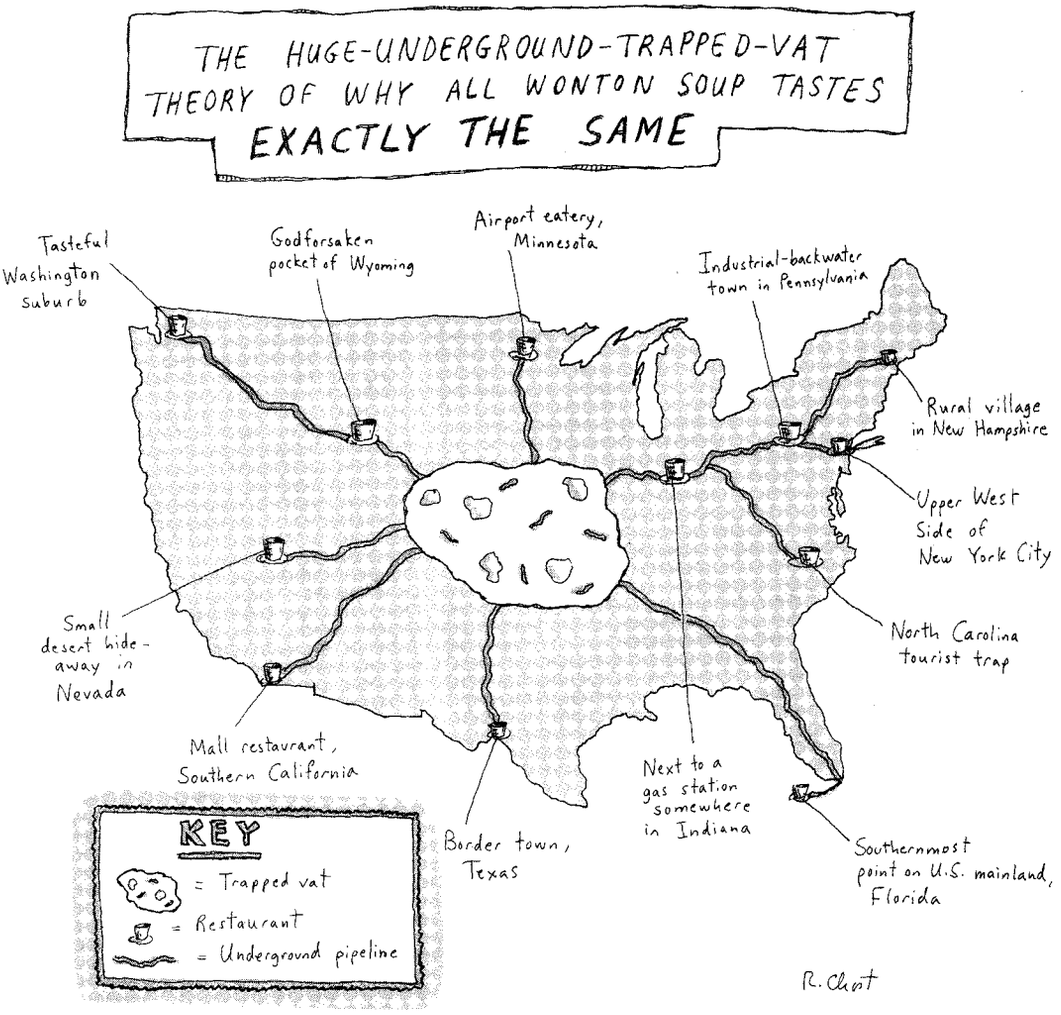
we met. I think he cut the ivy off my chimney two years ago. What do I want? I want to fatten him, mature him, dress him, and send him to Yale. Driving my car around the block, I crank down a window, planning to speak and ask him where we met, but he, of course, has vanished. Those are his accomplishments. He can queue up and vanish.

•

I wake from a dream or reverie of last February, or this February, or some February to come. I am working at West House. I wake at six or seven, drink coffee lightheartedly and naked in the kitchen, dress and walk through the snow to the garage, where I kiss beloved B. and am given a plate of scrambled eggs. Back at the house, I work until one, when I eat my sandwiches and take a rest. The days are getting longer, but it starts to get dark at four, and I put on my skis, and pole happily around the widest circle. I come in after dark, take a shower, and am dressing when I hear G. at the door. She is a loving, intelligent, and beautiful woman, and why should this be so remarkable? You will say that is the old chimera, but why should a loving, beautiful, and intelligent woman exist only in the imagination of a lonely man? Her hair is dark. This, I think, is a new note. She is not terribly young, but her face and her skin show no trace, no trace of age that can be seen by these old eyes. I am not sure what we do—we might do anything—but whatever it is we are contented with one another. I seem to take her to a restaurant, and we spend the night together. In the morning we have a terrible breakfast in some roadside place, but the coffee is good. This seems to me a poem, or perhaps a song. And I wake happily from another dream in which I think I live and walk in an accomplished, representative government that is efficient, visionary, and victorious. Bureaucracy has vanished, along with smallpox, and we have gone on to better things.


THE HUGE-UNDERGROUND-TRAPPED-VAT THEORY OF WHY ALL WONTON SOUP TASTES EXACTLY THE SAME
Tasteful Washington suburb
Godforsaken pocket of Wyoming
Airport eatery, Minnesota
Industrial-backwater town in Pennsylvania
Rural village in New Hampshire
Upper West Side of New York City
North Carolina tourist trap
Next to a gas station somewhere in Indiana
Southernmost point on U.S. mainland, Florida
Border town, Texas
Mall restaurant, Southern California
Small desert hide-away in Nevada
KEY
= Trapped vat
= Restaurant
= Underground pipeline
R. Chast

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I was crowding forty when I stood under an apartment-house canopy and planned to write "Oh, what can you do with a man like that?," and so on, through the end of "Goodbye, My Brother" and those other stories and novels that record my break with irony and dismay. And here is that New York at the close of the Second World War that so few of us remember: one stood in line at Rockefeller Center; the 20th Century to Chicago was on time; almost everybody wore a hat. The singular force of time, through which one seems to swim, let me describe everyone with gray hair until my own head turned gray when everyone else's hair went brown.

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Mr. Ross insisted on a degree of decorum. One could not, of course, use a word like "fuck." One complained, of course, and published stories elsewhere, but I, it seems, had my own concept of decorum, and when Mr. Ross used the word "fuck" at the lunch table I would jump. Having noticed this, Mr. Ross would, at lunch, throw a "fuck" in my direction now and then, to watch me jump. He was, himself, not a decorous man, but he taught me that decorum can be a mode of language, born of our need to speak with one another—and a language that, having been learned, was in no way constraining.

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So, he stands in the forest, making his choice. On his left is the girl, dressed in white, with yellow hair—golden, really. Any gesture or movement she makes—picking a leaf off her skirt—seems to involve an increase of light. The other is dark-haired, dark-eyed; even the luminousness of her skin is dark. She is slender, long-

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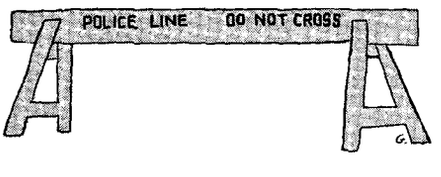
breasted, with very long fingers. The girls represent—quite unoriginally—night and day, gravity and weightlessness, the sun and the moon. The girl with yellow hair represents a boundless chain of lighted rooms; the easy talk and laughter of friends and lovers; healthy pride, and a winning score. The other represents one room, and that quite small and unlighted. She is contentedly friendless and her appetite is for out-of-season grapes. And yet it is the declivity of her back that his fingers seem to want to trace, and by fingers, of course, I mean something very different. So he stands in the forest, asked to choose between the boundless light and a darkness whose only charm is mystery. But what he overlooks is the fact that lightness and darkness have their own opinions. If he has invested in tax-exempt municipal bonds, thinks the girl with yellow hair, are they insured? Can he get a taxi on a rainy night? Will he be cross at the fact that I am always ten minutes early for everything, everything, and that I eat candy bars between meals and leave the wrappers in ashtrays? Does he snore? thinks the representative of darkness. Does he have a morning cough? Does he have no consideration at all, since it is twenty minutes past the time for my blood-pressure pill, and I am allergic to the roses with which this forest is filled? He even overlooks the trees, which have their own thoughts and anxieties. A virulent rust, invisible to the eye, can wither the mightiest of them. A wisteria vine, no more today than a strand of hair on the trunk, can bend and break the spine of an oak. He stands in Arden—a forest whose richness and profundity he can never comprehend, deceived as he is by the importance of his choice.

•

An overcast and foreboding sky—not really dark, because there is light in the woods when I walk the dogs, but a serious sky. It is very cold. Only a little snow falls. See the old man, walking through the woods, pouring into the ears of his dogs the griefs and frustrations of his marriage; and on the hill at the edge of his land are the graves of five former dogs, into whose ears he poured his laments, even as they lay dying. Oh, why does she spit in my face? Why does she knee me in the groin? Why has she not spoken to me now for eighteen days? The dogs pick up the scent of deer these days and find the walks exciting.

•

So, thinking of H., I think of her as a sunlit playing field, into which I have, often enough, jogged out with my football, ready for fun. But then, to be honest, there were the days in which I hid in the bushes at the edge of the field; there was the hockey game I missed because I couldn't find my skate laces, and the football scrimmage I sidestepped because my jockstrap was either stolen or misplaced. In short, I have been a coward. In retrospect, I think myself blameless, but this darkness in my nature seems inexpungible. I have been a coward, and perhaps it is cowardice that we see in this old man, haranguing his dogs with tales of his unhappiness.



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I have no perspective at all. After the interviewers leave, I drive the maid home and walk with the dogs. My sexuality is highly irritable and distorts my view of things. The last of the light has that splendid and inde-

AIR-CONDITIONED AIR

Of windows closing on muslin curtains
so they no longer swelled into hoopskirts
or swooned across love seats

the night a carriage raced from lab to lodgings,
men in white coats thrusting a bundled blanket
at a dreamer—their swaddled ice

the first from his machine. Farewell,
ceiling fans that propelled interim regimes
into torrid zones, palm courts

fawning over wilted colonials,
aspics weeping onto the native greens.
Farewell, the flies that tended leftover meat.

Like servants shooed from table,
they wove shadow to shadow
through the vestigial dusk.

It is late. The street light
lies fair upon the strait, on the coast
of Florida it gleams. Sea turtles lay their eggs

in the parking lots of hotels
glimmering and vast. Come to the window,
air-conditioned is the night air,

you can hear the comfort of its roar
begin to chill and then begin again,
the flow of something human drowning the sea

somewhere far below our room.
The air is calm tonight, the same air as tomorrow,
and we are here. Look how the little candelabra

of a pleasure boat is borne by the darkness
of water over the old slave route.

—Debora Greger

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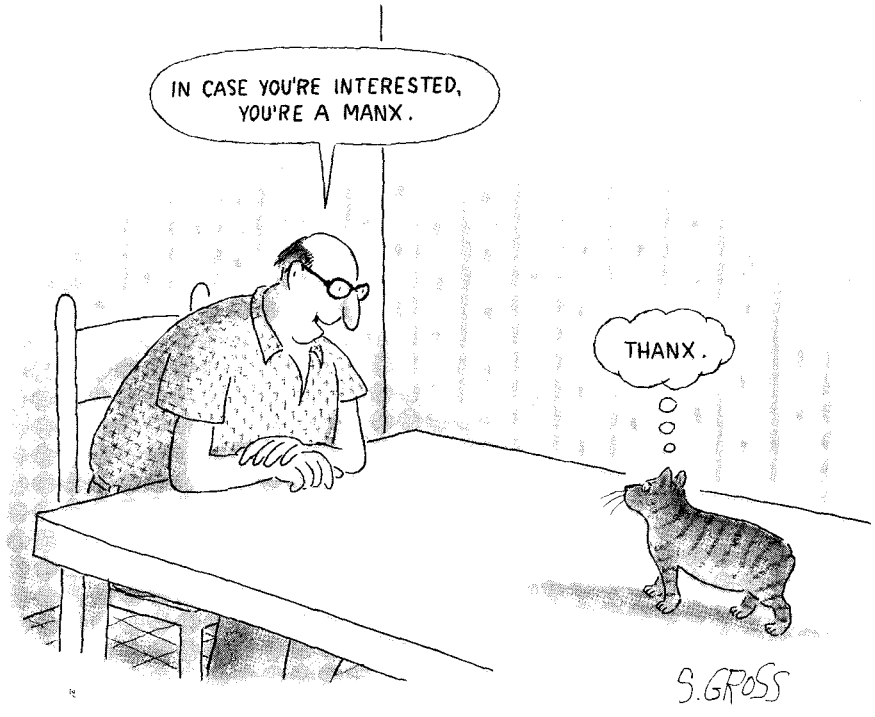
scribable glow that one finds only in winter twilights. Now, for the first time, I see color in the trees. So, there will be spring and summer. And, walking up the hill carrying the garbage pail, I see a holly leaf on the drive. I am as thrilled as Leander was when he saw the green from Advent on the chancel carpet. The nearly black, hard leaf with its thorns means potency and vigor. That it means nothing at all is unimportant. It is important that I am stirred.

I become myself; and so I will try to review what has contributed to my painful sense of loss. My mortality is what I begin with, manifested by my sexual drives. These excitements have always been random, and when I have refused the love of men it has been, I like to think, a choice and not a force of repression. The present problem, if it is that, began a year ago when I found myself alone in a squalid motel with a young man who had none of the attributes of a sexual irregular. We embraced briefly, declared our love, and parted. We have since then met four or five times, but I have thought of him often. The importance of this is impossible to judge. It could be compared to an infection that threatens my well-being but is dormant much of the time. Such is my injured heart. He married for the second time in December and left my letters unanswered. What I expected from him was easy companionship, lewdness, and some relaxation of the rigors of living with a wife. On my return from Russia, I suffered a violent spasm of alienation. Darkness, for example, offended me. To read a book, I would turn on six lamps. The only house I have ever owned struck me as dirty, confusing, and costly. In the piles of mail I found a letter from him, and it was the first that I opened. He hinted at the indifference of his marriage and hinted—no more—at his love for me.

It is impossible for me to describe what followed. I am highly susceptible to romantic love. I remember weeping bitterly over D. and L. I became engulfed in the anticipation of an erotic romance that corroded and destroyed that self-possession that defines a man. Yesterday at lunch I experienced that intoxicating arrogance of the self-declared alien, the sexual expatriate. I am unlike you, unlike any of you eating your wretched lunches in a Greek diner.



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I am queer, and happy to say so. At the same time, the waitress is so desirable that I could eat her hands, her mouth. This is the cardinal sin of pride. I rest, I sleep. How reluctant I am to admit to taking a nap. Somewhere along the line, my thinking, my chemistry, my genitals, and my spirit are restored; and that makes it possible to continue that voyage or pilgrimage that is one's life. I am not sure of the hour of day. The taste of that given bread and salt that is my life is in my mouth. This would seem to be God's will. I walk the dogs. I skate, and tire very quickly. I cook dinner, drive to church, watch a thrilling movie on TV, and sleep happily in my skin for the first time in what seems to be a year.

•

It is a week since I waited in this drafty kitchen for my lover. It all seems to have worked out wonderfully, although the composure I enjoy on waking seems not to last deep into the morning. What the hell is a man who made half a million dollars last year doing in an art colony where he sits alone in a room that is obviously furnished in the aftermath of a disaster? The chair he sits in comes from some kitchen. The narrow, threadbare rug belonged in some hall. The bed or cot is one of those expedient surfaces on which we fuck those people whose last names escape us. But what about the white bureau with a keyhole for every drawer, delicate hand pulls, a mirror held up with such narcissistic chasteness that it seems to ask, Who is the fairest of them all? How in hell did this bastion of middle-class chasteness—this repository for sachets, laces, old dance cards, fans, dried flowers, preserved rose leaves, broken beads, and perhaps a pearl-handled revolver—how did this find its way into this bleakest of rooms? There must, of course, have been a flood. Only a natural disaster of unprecedented sweep and violence could account for this feat of dislocation. There must be a chamber pot in the closet, and that half-burned candle in its wretched glass holder is left over from yesterday's thunderstorms, when all the lights always went out.

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I seem to have some vision of the waywardness of man and the blessings of velocity. I remember C., driving me to dinner with his wife and sons, blindly stopping the car on the road shoulder, making a wild grab for my cock, and kissing me on the ear. I was polite—no more—and so we continued on to the dinner. And I think of an article in yesterday's *Times* in which Louise Huxtable discusses the architecture of roadside restaurants, meant to catch our sympathies at any speed above fifty miles an hour. There was, long ago, the practical decade, fol-

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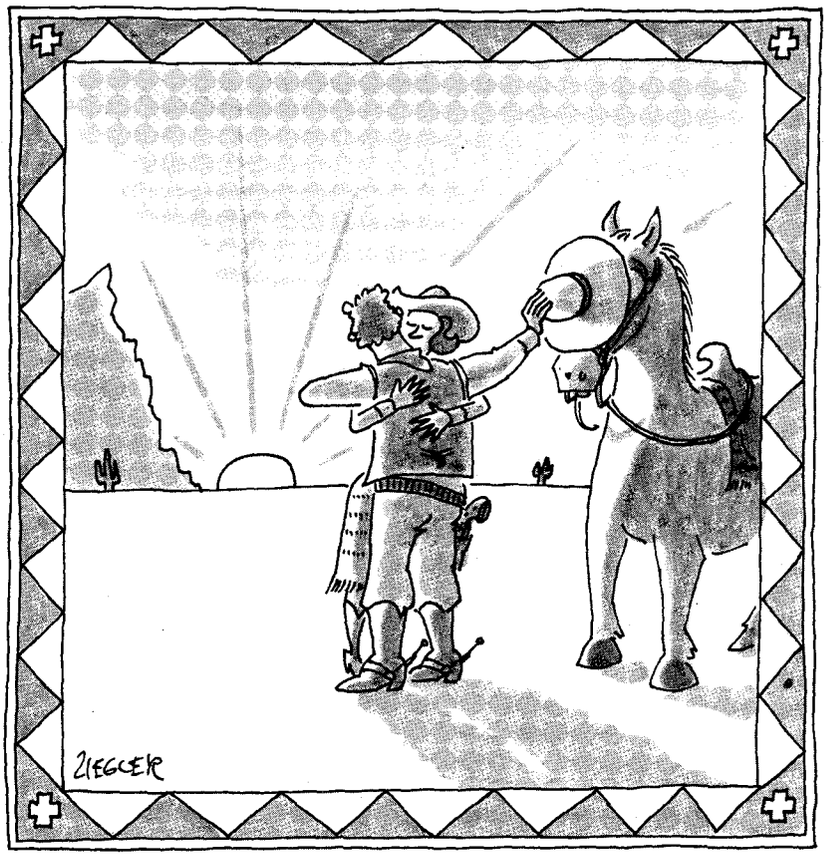

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lowed by the restorations and the progressive architects, working in their own idiom. What she does not observe is that this nomadic, roadside civilization is the creation of the loneliest travellers the world has ever seen. Quick-food stands that resemble the House of the Seven Gables, Colonial Williamsburg, and the Parson Capen house are not picked for their charm or their claim to a past; they are picked because we are a homeless people looking at nightfall for a window in which a lamp burns, and an interior warmed by an open fire, where we will be fed and understood and loved. The rash of utterly false mansards, false, small-paned windows, and electric candlesticks is the heart's cry of a lonely, lonely people. And after opening a thousand rough-hewn doors, with their false, wrought-iron hardware, after warming ourselves at electric fires and reading a menu that is a reproduction of something from the century before last, we feel that the past will not feed and warm and understand and love us; and so we go on to the future—to the space between the stars where our love is waiting; we eat our wretched food in rocket ships, flying saucers, and pieces of Mars and the moon. Surely we will be understood there. And so one sees this great, nomadic nation on roads built by blackmailing unions and the lobbies of contractors, manufacturers, truck-fleet owners, and politicians of all sorts. We see a great people turned nomadic in their passionate search for love.

•

Absolute candor does not suit me, but I will come as close as possible in describing this chain of events. Lonely, and with my loneliness exacerbated by travel, motel rooms, bad food, public readings, and the superficiality of standing in reception lines, I fell in love with M. in a motel room of unusual squalor. His air of seriousness and responsibility, the bridged glasses he wore for his nearsightedness, and his composed manner excited my deepest love, and I called him the next night from California to say how much he meant to me. We wrote love letters for three months, and when we met again we tore at each other's clothes and sucked each other's tongues. We were to meet twice again, once to spend some hours in a motel and once to spend twenty minutes naked before a directors' lunch I had to attend. I was to think of him for a year, continually and with the most painful confusion. I believed that my homosexuality had been revealed to me and that I must spend the rest of my life unhappily with a man.

•

A bright day—cold, "fresh," as we say in other languages; me, horny. In the evening paper—in this provincial, small-town newspaper—one reads that a Cuban couple, solitary, hardworking people, who had no friends, lost their son in a drowning accident in the municipal swimming pool and committed double suicide. They closed the garage door, connected a garden hose to the exhaust pipe of the car, and suffocated in each other's arms. "They were so unhappy after they lost their son," said the neighbors. "She cried and cried. She used to embroider a lot and knit and crochet, but after they lost the boy she didn't do anything but cry." Mr. Nils Jugstrom, returning from his job at the Townsend wire factory, noticed a cedar chest on the road shoulder of Route 23. It was a good-looking chest, nearly new, and he pulled over to the side of the road. Opening the chest, he found the mutilated body of a man with dark hair and a full mustache. It was some time before he could get a car to stop, and call the police. He sat alone by the corpse while hundreds of cars, hastening home, passed him with an indifference that he took personally. Deaths, this afternoon, are confined to the local nursing homes. Mrs. Cherryweather found a burglar in her shower stall, carrying her TV. While she called the police he escaped out a window. The high-school lacrosse team made four scores in the last eight minutes of play and defeated Haverstraw seven to six. I like small-town papers.

To have been expelled from Thayer Academy for smoking and then to have been given an honorary degree from Harvard seems to me a crowning example of the inestimable opportunities of the world in which I live and in which I pray generations will continue to live.

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None of us can clearly remember those years at the turn of the century

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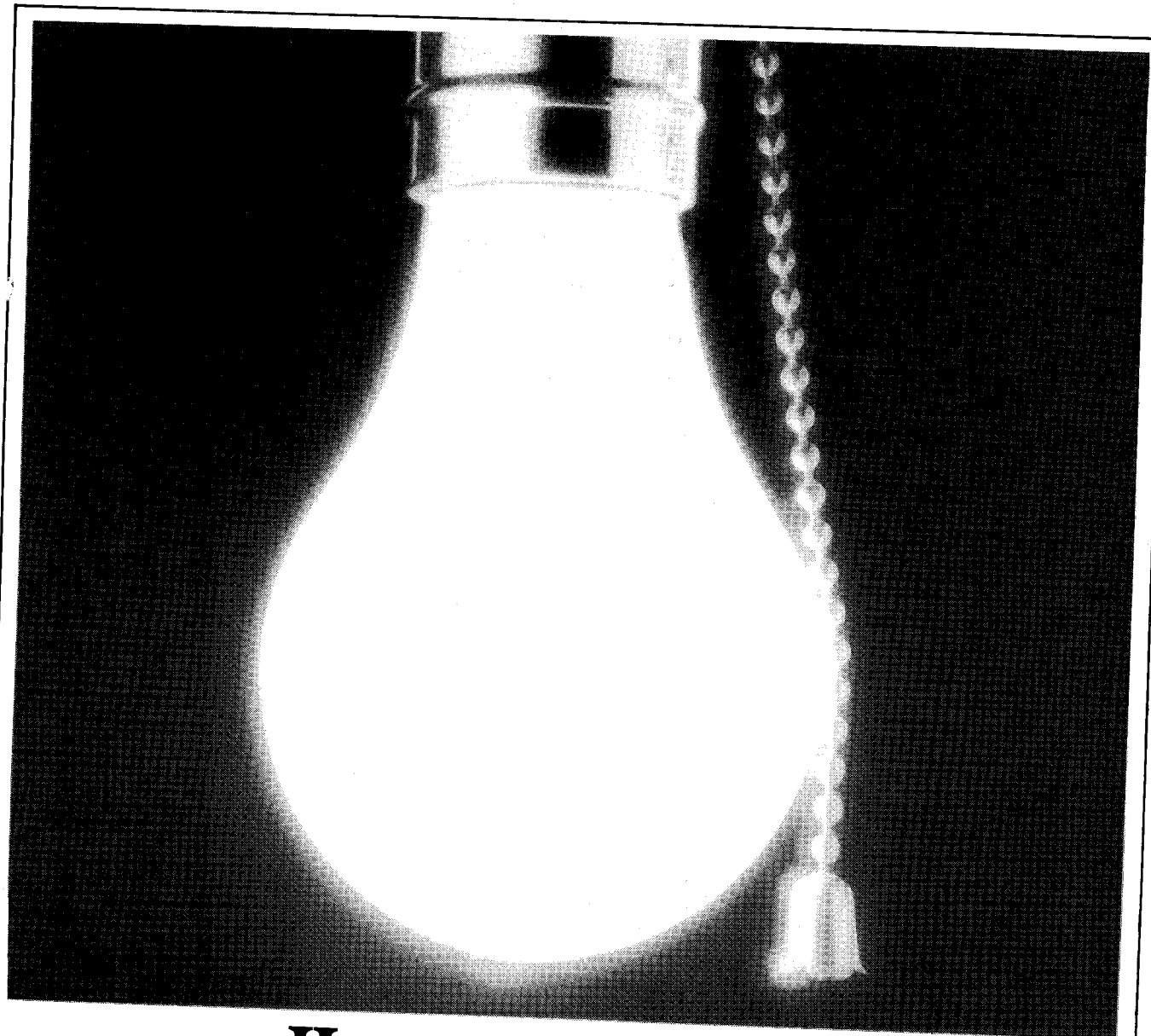
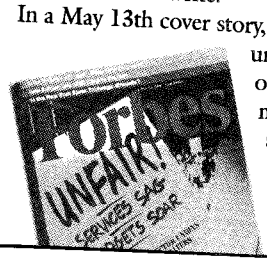


How many public sector union employees does it take to change it? One. And twenty-five to supervise.

Unbelievable. From 1980-89, the number of workers on state payrolls grew twice as fast as the population at large. In Illinois, 4 times as fast. 6 times as fast in Massachusetts. 7 in Connecticut. And 14 in New York.

While overall union membership is down a third from its 1975 peak, public sector unions have gained 1.2 million members in the past decade. What are we getting from all these new people? Not much. Just look at the garbage piled up on our sidewalks. The crime problem in our towns and cities. Kids who can't read or write.

In a May 13th cover story, Forbes told its readers that union success in winning control of the work place has meant hiring more and more supervisors. Instead of people who actually do the work.



And it's not just happening in big cities like New York. State and local governments everywhere must wake up to the fact that public employee union demands could eventually bankrupt them.

Maybe it's time the politicians paid more attention to Forbes. They'd learn what our readers already know: That Forbes' gutsy reporting gives them insights they can't get anywhere else. Not from Business Week. Not from Fortune.

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when the exalted arts of painting, sculpture, and music became so chaotic, so lost in an area of metaphysics which they had neither the vision nor the intelligence to exploit, that they surrendered their spiritual responsibilities and left to literature, and to literature alone, the responsibility of continuing that dialogue—vital to the life of the planet—that we and our kind carry on with one another, with our landscapes, with our oceans, and with our gods.

•

When I was a young man, I woke one morning in the unclean bedsheets of a squalid furnished room, poor and hungry and lonely, and thought that some morning I would wake in my own house, holding in my arms a fragrant bride and hearing from the broad lawn beyond my window the voices of my beloved children. And so I did. But there was in the air some deep, continuous sound that I had not imagined, and, going to the window to see if it was raining, I saw that the day was brilliant and that the sound I heard was the brook—a reward that my most desperate imaginings had overlooked. The bounty of things, as it so often is, had been richer than my imagination of it. And so I wake this morning. I hear again the roar of the brook. I sleep alone these days, having been exiled from my own bed, closet, and washbasin by a troubled wife. All I hold in my arms these days is a memory of the girl on the Murad cigar box. But my children are comely and loving and self-possessed and walking over those parts of the world that interest them; and my daughter once kissed me and said, "You can't win them all, Daddy." And so I can't.

•

I recall coming into Rome on the train at dusk. I can't remember from where I was returning, but I was returning to a wife or a mistress and a circle of singing children. It was a hot dusk. The train was passing through that shantytown at the edge of the city, where the houses are no more than sheds, redeemed by the wild fertility of their small gardens. In one of these small gardens a naked young man was bathing himself from a pail. I expect he was getting ready to wait on table at some trattoria on the Gianicolo. I saw nothing of him other than his youthfulness, the whiteness of his skin, and the thickness of hair at his armpits and crotch. I loved him. Oh, how I loved him! That he might be a cretin with bad breath and a grating voice would never occur to me. So I entered the city and the circle of friends, deeply saddened to think that I had left my heart in the slums, deeply saddened and walking with the stoop of a guilty impostor. Now that I'm an old, old man, such waywardness seems only some part of life's richness.

•

So the grail, the grail; and anyone who thinks of this in terms of genitalia is a contemptible noncombatant. The grail, the grail! It fills one's mind in the early morning as one's skin is filled with ardor. There is no question of compromise or defeat. One wants only to make an exemplary contribution, and if this is accomplished one's ending is inconsequential!

•

One wouldn't want to love oneself. That damages our usefulness. One wouldn't want to pursue the past. That is bad for the posture. And one wouldn't want to be one of those old men who take out their cocks and clear their throats as if they were about to write, with their seminal discharge, one of those lengthy postwar treaties that will crush the national spirit, surrender the critical isthmus, and yield the mountain passes to the enemy.

•

Loneliness I taste. The chair I sit in, the room, the house, none of this has substance. I think of Hemingway: what we remember of his work is not so much the color of the sky as the absolute taste of loneliness. Loneliness is not, I think, an absolute, but its taste is more powerful than any other. I think that endeavoring to be a serious writer is quite a dangerous career.

•

Reading old journals, I find Mary railing at me for my lack of virility, and perhaps her disappointments were

serious. I find myself enormously happy in her arms. My random bones are listed with candor, and this is some part of the richness of my life. When I am given love I seem quite contented. Such merit as my work possesses is rooted in the fact that I have been unsuccessful in my search for love.

•

So, I shift my skating, late in the day, to S.'s pond, where the ice is pristine but where the reaches are limited. On the big pond you can skate straight away until you're tired. Here you skate in a circle. The days are longer now. At four I will tire, before the sun sets. The sky is mixed, but there is some blue, and the motion of skating, and the lightness and coldness of the air involve quite clearly for me a beauty—a moral beauty. By this I mean that it corrects the measure and the nature of my thinking. Space, perhaps, is what I mean, but there is the moral beauty of light, velocity, and environment, which seems profoundly sympathetic. I drink tea and jaw and skate until dark.

•

So, let us assume that you have been given something to say. Something to do is quite simple. You can take your bicycle to Mount Kisco and ski to the dam. At dinner, B. mentions watching two couples taking the train into the city for some sort of celebration. "Twelve dollars is really a good price for a dinner these days—but don't eat too many of the hors d'oeuvres. They serve these great hot hors d'oeuvres, but if you eat too many of them you can't eat the dinner." He describes their clothing, their accents, and persuasively imagines what the dinner in the restaurant will be like. This reminds me of a scene—Gide, Nabokov, Woolf, or Cheever—where one's insight into the lives of strangers becomes uncontrollable, and one becomes some part of the tragedy. This seems to have been a story I wrote many years ago, and seems to be the image of infinity I have recently been obsessed with. This is the image of the young man in an art gallery looking at a drawing of a citadel besieged by barbarians. He does not yet know that he is being besieged by barbarians himself. I think it is in Nabokov that we try to intercede in the assassination

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of a character and find ourselves powerless. So what one has is the observer travelling on a train. The traveller's discernment enables him to describe two couples who are going into the city to celebrate a wedding anniversary. The traveller will guess the source of their clothing and its cost, the rooms where they live, the food they eat, their occupations and incomes; but then we will come to that point where the observer is tragically involved, simply through having committed himself to observation without restraint. This is a story I seem to have written, and I believe it's been written by others. "Stop, stop, stop—don't look any further" may be spoken by one of the objects being observed. You could use Venga, the sorceress in Bulgaria—or change that to Romania. That is, looking into a crystal ball, or dealing a pack of cards, she finds herself tragically involved in what she sees. To put it simply, she says, "This cave will fall onto us, and we will suffocate."

•

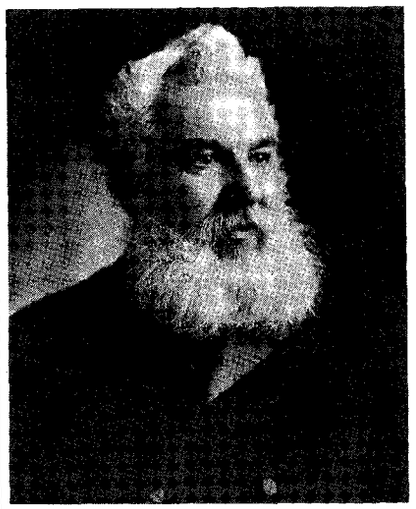
The most extraordinary thing about these mornings is *le cafard.* There seems no reason for this, other than the fact that I sleep in a poorly ventilated room, because both I and the old dog with whom I sleep are inclined to get chills. On waking, I find myself in a lethargy for which I have no words. This would be lessened were I with a lover, and that is a long tale that I will tell later. The first sound I hear may be Mary going to the kitchen to make coffee. Then I hear my dear old dog wagging his tail as my beloved son goes to the bathroom to shave for the day's work, having just run eight or ten miles. Much is expected of me during the day. There is writing to be accomplished, a rich and various correspondence to be maintained, vast sums of money to be banked if that is my inclination, landscapes spread out for skating, skiing, and bicycling, all of which I greatly enjoy; and yet I suffer a lethargy which cannot be distinguished by a name or a description. This is not despair; this is not even the Eastern Carpathian Monday Morning Blues; this enjoys a dreadful force that escapes language.

•

So, Federico leaves. This seems so deep in the skein of things that I have no perspective. On a rainy Saturday afternoon we go together to the movies. We see Dustin in "Kramer vs. Kramer." When we leave the theatre it is growing dark. We walk together across a parking lot. I seem to hear my voice. I am jawing on about film techniques, about the new spectrum that eliminates the light of day. I mean only to say that here is a tall young man with his old father, walking across a parking lot on a rainy dusk on one of the last days of March. I remember—fleetingly—driving him home from school as a boy. We sometimes stopped for a hot pizza and sometimes for fried chicken. None of this is very vivid, although it was at the time. He has, for me, completed cutting an apple tree with the chain saw. I remember, not vividly, his saving my life when a birch fell onto me. So I say that what I love is the world that lies spread out before him. It is nothing so simple as this. It is nothing so simple as this.

•

A book comes, of which I am the subject, and Mary says, "People write those books for practically nothing." This is my reading of the line, but only self-destruction would be accomplished by giving the line seven—or ten—readings. I seem to be up against a clinical situation and to be giving this a clinical response, which is less than excellent. I have come to feel that my failing in every way is imperative to her sense of being alive. I don't know whether I should say this to the children. On that very snowy night before I left for South America I slammed around the streets here in my front-wheel-drive, not at all anxious about having to walk if the car got stuck. S. was having his autograph party. I went to this and had him inscribe a book to Mary. The drive home was great fun. The car gave an exceptional performance. Mary was in the kitchen watching TV. I gave her the book. She looked at me with utter confusion and said, "You really are a nice person, aren't you?" This seems to reveal the fact that only as a perverted brute, scorned by the world, can I be accepted. Should I mention at lunch that I have been asked to make the commencement address at her college she will say, "Think of all the people who must have refused. They're scraping the bottom of the barrel. I hate that college, anyhow." I do feel that it is important to her that I be loathsome,



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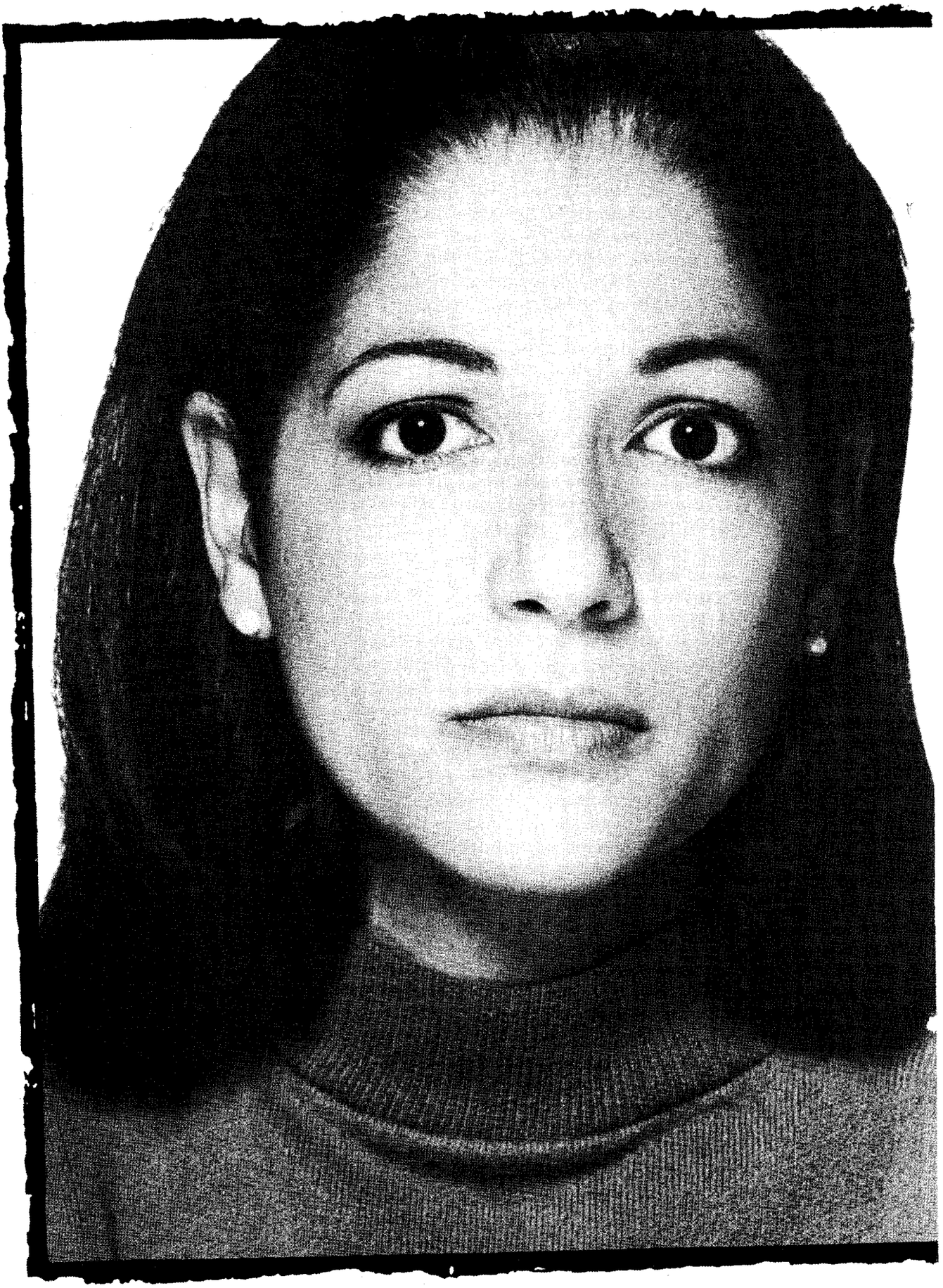

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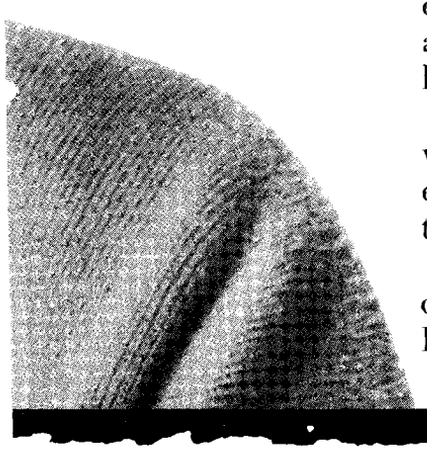

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and I think this perception will be, may be, of some help.

•

So I wake a little before dawn—at dawn, in fact. There is light in the air, light in the room; and I can see my clothes on the floor where I left them. The sound of birdsong has begun to be heard, and in the distance—somewhere in the southwest—there is the rumble of thunder. The old dog is asleep or is pretending to be asleep, and I think the thunder might frighten her. There is a flash of lightning, and I count to nearly twenty before the noise of this explosion reaches us. The storm, then, is twenty miles away, I think, and may take another course, sparing the old dog an attack of misery. There is another flash of light, the explosion seems more immediate, and the old dog wakes and whimpers. Then I think that H. is in the East, and how much I love her. I seem to fill with light, a curious radiance rather like the fire of gunpowder. How simple and powerful it all seems. We were meant to love each other. My fear of dogs, her allergy to artichokes, her nearsightedness, and my deafness have nothing to do with the case. We love each other, and so I lie in bed and worry that the thunderstorm will frighten the old dog, but I worry about little else. The light and the discordant racket that birds make increase, and the thunderstorm sulks off toward New Rochelle. This all seems to me a most natural course of events. I have known this marvellous feeling before—known it with other girls, known it with men, known it with that wife who refuses these days to let me enter her bedroom. It seems to me quite as natural as walking.

•

And I think that my wife has cooked for me for forty years. This seems to me one of the great labors of history. She has often served me with bitterness; she has often refused to speak to me when she summoned me to the table; but night after night for a decade less than half a century she has brought food to the table. And I think, lying naked in the early light, that this is an enormous task. And I also think that I have found the will to leave and that I will take none of my quaint souvenirs, since this is firstly the home of my children.

•

So sitting on the porch, reading an uninteresting book, I suffer a loss of memory. I do not know who I am or where I am. This is easily corrected with movement—I efficiently plant a row of broccoli—but I think it must be observed should it worsen. I think I mentioned it to the doctor and got no response. It is the sense of a level of consciousness that I do not comprehend: some firmament beyond mind, very like the structures in space—this is the imagery—but, for a moment, overwhelming. I am not in this world; I am merely falling, falling. Examining this, thinking (because of our psychoanalytical habits) of some form of guilt, I think I may, as a young man, have tasted some ultimate in futility—getting off a trolley car in Boston on a winter night—and fled from this with a velocity that now claims me as its victim. It could be, of course, that my old heart is not pumping blood into my old brain.

•

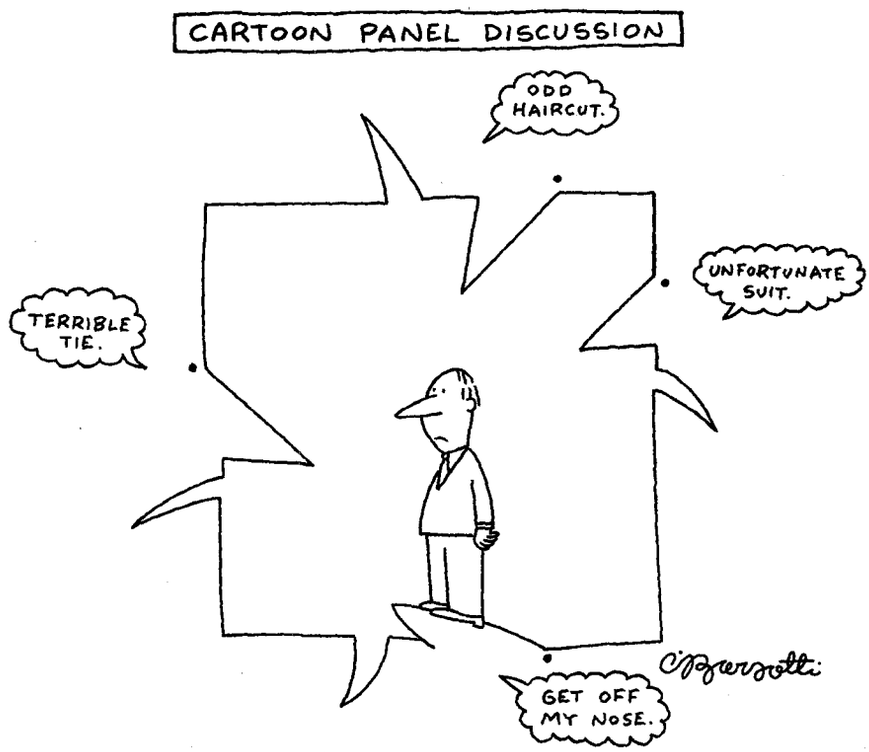
I weed the peonies, pretending to be some old Irish gardener, long dead. I do recall Mary's line when I asked sentimentally about the flowers, "Oh, where did you find them?" "I picked them" was what she snapped. I truly think she is unpleasant today. I sing loudly to the old dog, "I picked a lemon in the garden of love, where only peaches grow."

•

Tomorrow is my sixty-eighth birthday and I am uneasy, although not painfully so.

•

In the evening paper one reads that an estimable woman of sixty has, upon her return from a party at the boat club, been strangled. Robbery could not have been the motive, since the corpse wore diamond earrings. The names of ten men have been published. They have been charged with public lewdness in the urinal of the railroad station. But how were these convictions arrived at, and what sort of life can one lead after having been publicized as a public lewd? Turn the page and see how disturbed Sissie and Brozzie are. Muzzy blew the shit out of Dazzy with a 20-gauge shotgun. She then wrote notes to the kiddies, telling them about their dentist appointments, an expected oil delivery, and the plants to be watered. How can these people move about in the world, how can they know love and the pleasures of friendship? Deep in an embrace, she will say, "You must know that my mother killed my father and herself." "You must know that I was arrested for public lewdness twenty-three years ago." "You must know that my mother was wearing these diamond earrings when she was strangled." Can love surmount these confessions? I see them on that



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island, my favorite island, my favorite island where all those friends and lovers you thought had been overtaken by infirmity or death are going happily from the restaurant to the beach or from the beach to the bowling alley.

Oh, give me a world of soothsayers and chimney sweeps!

•

And so, what is the fear, the nameless dread? It is, quite simply, the loss of one's powers. One's intelligence, one's memory, one's gifts as a lover. One has seen the grossness of madness. Dismounting from my bicycle at the head of the hill here to speak with the Z.s, I do not know where I am. This, I expect, is a fleeting seizure of amnesia.

•

Yesterday I drive to the village to cash a check I have forgotten to bring with me. Going down the hill toward the bank, I see how the mountains of the west shore reach down to the Hudson. The foliage is full grown now, and the day is sunny with clouds that now and then threw a passing shadow. The mountains and the water seem quite beautiful, and it is a deeply emotional beauty; it seems to me a memory of some happiness I have known and lost, and that I am happily in pursuit of. But the memory is strong, powerful. I can smell the flooring of the porch on which I sit while I wait for my beloved to finish whatever she is doing (combing her hair, or boning the fish) and serenely watch the shadows and the light move over the wooded mountains and the river. I have been here.

•

In the thirties and forties men seemed to fear homosexuality as the early mariners feared sailing off the end of the ocean in a world supported on a turtle's back.

•

And in my memories of happiness there are, God knows, some thorns, and there is the fact that I was a younger man. I insist that I still possess a capacity for happiness. I think of F. calling from Wilmington to ask, "Weren't we happy, Johnny? Weren't we really happy?"

•

The brute force of loneliness would account for our most spectacular carnal escapades, those erotic collisions in underpasses on rainy midnights. You'll never know whose tooth marks were left on your ass and your forearm, come the morning.

Reading about old age, I am pleased to know that chemicals can account for the depression that seems to overtake me these mornings. Lying in bed with a wish to die, I am happy to know that this is an excess of tryflexon and a tax on my valvular plimbits.

•

This is a story to be read in bed on a rainy night in an old house near a winding and seldom travelled road, with perhaps a view of some mountains, and within walking distance of a stream where one can fish and swim.

•

Old age seems to have presented me with two discernible changes. I think these constitutional. One is an increase in fear. In reading of a Vermont winter I think not of the skiing or the mountains in a morning light; I think only of the cold as some premonition of death. I think only of pain. And watching on TV a film of some waves breaking on a shore in the early morning, I think how far I have gone from this light, this freshness, this sense of being a happy participant. The last time we went to the sea my wife was intensely unhappy. But I think that I must honestly assess both my fear of winter—of death—and this loss of facility in imagining happiness on long beaches.

•

What I would like—to speak very generally—is a celebration; I say from time to time that I would like to write a story about a success, although that may not be in my range. There is the old man who seems to be taking shape—although as I walked yesterday in the woods, pursued by deerflies, it seemed that the old man could be a great bore. Could you write a success story about a man whose determination, whose inspiration, whose giftedness enabled him to dissuade or conquer some force of thoughtlessness? Is there any hero in the literature that I have loved?

•

What the priest says is "If you are one of those who have waited patiently for the summer, I most sincerely hope

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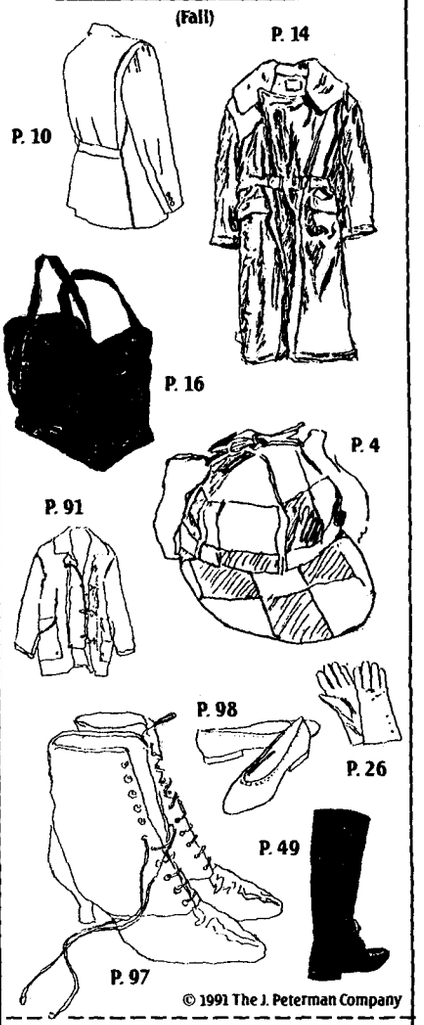

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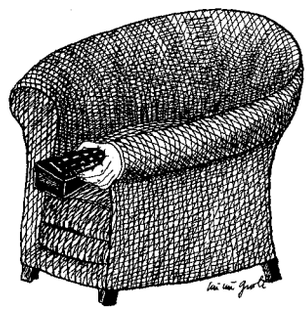
you are enjoying what we have now. For my part, I have had enough. The church has been very hot, and the fan in the sacristy window makes very little difference. I am hoping and praying that someday we may have a more effective ventilating system. Be assured that you will be in my prayers and thoughts, especially at the Passion play in Oberammergau."

•

The night is hot and airless, and I have a recurrence of that chest pain that seeps into my jaw and that, as I recall, has entertained some doctor. A little freshness comes into the valley, but it is soon gone. The two conversational exchanges with my wife are hideously unpleasant, and then when I enter the kitchen to get a cup of coffee she seizes her lemon juice and flees. It is precisely as though I had encountered a witch. I do remember that as a child she was accused of burning her mother's house to the ground. It may be that her negativism is too deep to be described as iconoclasm. I mean simple matters such as leaving the tap running all night during a water crisis, or unplugging the deep freeze and spoiling a large investment in frozen food. This is the same thing one saw in Heathrow Airport when she was pounding on a door—and weeping. The door said "ENTRANCE IS FORBIDDEN" in four languages, but her action seemed nothing so small as an endeavor to inconvenience her husband. She seemed to be playing out a role in some world other than this, which she has experienced or is preparing to experience. When he first saw her pounding on the airport door at three in the morning he felt that some insight was being revealed to him. It was some years later that he felt merely impatience and then boredom.



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M. arrives as the clock strikes five and we watch a ballgame, screw, have dinner, watch another game, and part, at my wish. In the morning he is late, and my inexperience in such affairs leaves me no traditional conclusions or anxieties. I am at a loss. When he arrives a light rain is falling, but we circle the Club Circle Motor Court route. Some villages in the Carpathians enjoy a forlornness that we find in this country only in a failing trailer settlement on a rainy Saturday morning. Even some of the television antennas are broken, and this one universal link is gone. The clotheslines are empty but for a single bedsheet that holds autumn leaves in its folds and must have hung there for weeks. There is a rank of mailboxes, but who would ever write these people a letter? One quite new car seems to have been abandoned, and while the paint shines and the license tag is current, goldenrod and daisies grow up between the wheels. The difference is that this forlornness in the Carpathians seems to have been carried over from Pleistocene days, while here in this country we seem to have cultivated it.

"Shut up," says M., "you'll turn on the sprinklers." I howl and so does he. We start north and hit a strip on Route 20. Here are the cut-rate furniture store; the doughnut factory; the countless outlets for public-execution food, many of them designed to resemble the mansions and mushroomy houses of dream landscapes; the Realtors'; shopping malls and gallerias; and a drive-in theatre showing "The Night of the Great Massage-Parlor Bust." But this clustering diminishes and vanishes and we are in what was once farming country, with acre and half-acre fields divided by light stands of timber. We see churches and houses that are quite unpretentious but whose façades show a charm and invention that seems patrician. How far we have come from talking doughnuts and "The Night of the Great Massage-Parlor Bust"! These houses enjoy views of this broad and fertile valley that leads from Albany to Buffalo and lies on the Laurentian plain between the Catskills and the Adirondacks, with an allegiance not to the Hudson estuary but to the Great Lakes. The valley is fertile; the views are vast; the sense for me is of a paradise, since everything I see represents intelligent and peaceful cultivation; avaricious nomadism, which has produced the strip, seems to have no place here. We visit my old friends the T.s, and I lose four dollars at backgammon. I have lost my loneliness briefly in a vast, erotic engorgement, but I am still so lonely that passing a remote farmhouse on whose lawn stands a little statue of a fisherman, bought perhaps from a mail-order catalogue, makes me wonder if the farmer's wife, or the farmer himself, bought this ornament with the hope that the winter would be less lonely. I am with a lover who, whenever I have touched him, has always been responsive, but I think of the pioneers who settled the West, and their travels through this valley, and my loneliness comes to seem insignificant. We return down the valley as night falls along the lights of the strip, and we go into the terrain of vast highways that link Boston, New York, Buffalo, and Albany, and our progress brings me a sense of dissipated energies. The force one found in the valley with its farms and their views is scattered here, and the sweep of light on the six-lane interstates is nomadic and impuissant. I think of the patrician farms on the hill and that the new houses there are uniform and uniformly vulgar. But I also recall a tract of uniform houses being slowly altered to resemble their owners and eventually triumphing over the sameness and monotony of their beginnings. One cannot intelligently long to reconstruct the circumstances of building a farmhouse two hundred years ago.

•

Fatigue is something I sought, and seem to have enjoyed on my return. I spoke with G.—a truly old and dear friend. Then in my studio I wrote a letter to Mary. I ate dinner with the company and went to an A.A. meeting. This is one of those gatherings where the sense of an encounter is forceful. I return to my studio and watch the ballgame. In the seventh inning I suffer a convulsion called a grand-mal seizure. I completely lose consciousness and come to in the emergency room of the Saratoga hospital in the company of a man who claims to be having an epileptic seizure. They are slapping him in the face and assuring him that his seizure is a transparent fraud. I am put in a room with an old man who rails loudly about his bowels. His bowels rack him pitilessly. I would find more serenity almost anywhere, and I am brooding on my escape when a male nurse kindly moves me to another room. In the morning my determination to avoid hazardous in-

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vestigations of my brain lands me in an ambulance, speeding south. I move into the hospital at home and am given tests for two days. Nothing is concluded; nothing is discovered. Mary is loving, patient, and I can really not recall a time when she has so unselfishly given herself to me. This is not carnal, and I am unable to feel, now, that my carnal sport with M. involves an infidelity. As men who love women we know our acrobatics to be second-rate, and our parting this morning seemed mandatory. We have work to accomplish, and we have appointments to keep. I shall endeavor to write Mary.

•

The fear of insanity, I was told by Cummings, who spoke for much of New England, is an unfortunate display of self-importance. Anyone who makes such an unnatural claim should be taken to an insane asylum and shown how the truly mad suffer gruelling and unremittent pain. I think I remember that B. in her madness suffered an unhappiness unlike anything that I have ever known. But I am uncomfortable (not intensely so) and would like to address Mary, H., and M., although the clarity I would seem to enjoy in this address would so lack warmth and lovingness that it would be frightening. I wake thinking of scrambled eggs, and it is revealed to me that any sustained sentimental life with a man who is not my brother or my son is highly taxing and quite impossible. But the wind blows the leaves off the trees, and the shadows change, and I think that I am an old man and should become more retiring and settle for a male companion and an uneventful life on a bicycle in some very flat country like the Netherlands, moving to the tropics when the cold winds of winter blow. This seems to be a delusion, and one associated with the resumption of my drinking life and, consequently, a prolonged and obscene performance of self-destructiveness beginning with obesity, a cirrhotic liver, a mistaken memory, and—presently—irreversible brain damage. Nothing is asked of me at this hour, nothing at all. I will take the lunchpails to the garage and perhaps bicycle around the block, leaving my manuscript in a cottage where a fire is burning. I could have the manuscript duplicated before I take my bicycle trip, but I will take

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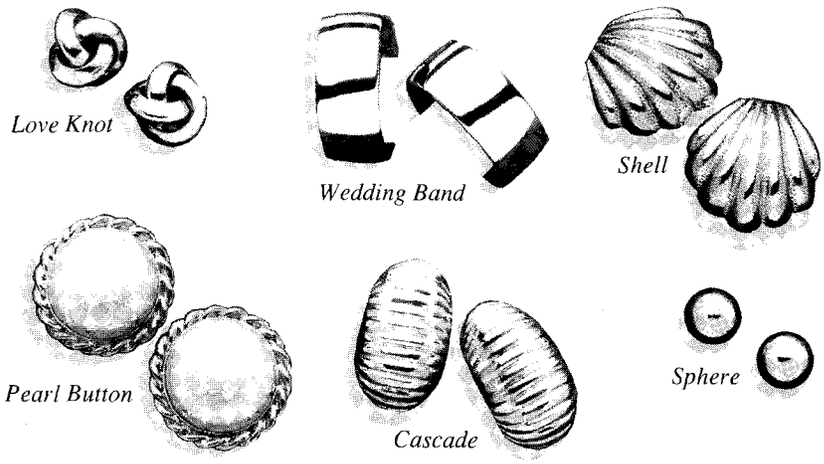

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the trip now, leaving my papers here so I can write letters when I return.

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I miss drinking. That's the simplest way of putting it. When it grows dark I would like a drink. The Hemingway story, or stories, about "Nada"—the utter nothingness that is revealed to an old man—seem to correspond to what I've experienced these last months. I do believe in God's will and the ordination of events, and it is perhaps stupid of me to question the ordination of my lying unconscious on the floor, convulsed and senseless. It did bring my wife back to me, and have I ever asked for anything more? I feel that perhaps the sorrow of these days will be revealed to me as having had its usefulness. The nature of this sorrow is bewildering. I seek some familiarity that eludes me; I want to go home and I have no home. I think that I have been ill, and one problem is that I lack vitality.

•

My biggest problem seems to be that I'm not working on my novel and won't be until I return to Saratoga. In reading my journal I see how, in Saratoga, I was available to seizures of lostness. Indeed, I have lost consciousness and my memory. I seem unable to comprehend that experience is consecutive. I was a young man here, then a mature man, and now I am an old man. Here I have been rich and poor, sick and ecstatically well, I have committed fornication with several women and now with a man. It is a struggle to comprehend this. Now I am writing a story about an old man who loves to skate. He becomes erotically involved with a young woman who reminds him of the national anthem at ballgames, and when she rebuffs him he becomes the lover of the elevator operator in her building. The only resolution I can imagine is that he could salvage the body of water on which he skates. I regret that I do not understand why it would seem mistaken to work on the story here, since Saratoga seems to be disputed territory. I trust I will be able to comprehend the passage of time. I am one of those old men; I am like a voyager who cannot remember the streams he has travelled. He cannot remember their swiftness or their depths; he cannot, at times, even correctly remember their names. I like to think that I am prepared to return to Saratoga and sit in that small house in the woods, quite uncertain about who I am and what my purpose in life is.

•

I am thoroughly happy with M., and I believe he feels the same way with me, and it is a happiness that I have never known before. I look, quite naturally, for its limitations, and when my great, dear friend gestures toward a field of golden leaves I admire the lightness but I have no wish to write a poem, as I would with a girl. This is not a lack, but it is a difference, and I do feel strongly that we both have work to do. Parting with M. is truly sweet, but in the morning I wake in the arms of an imaginary girl.

•

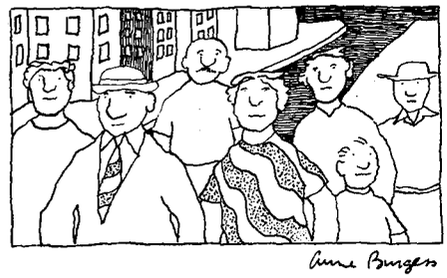
I turn on the TV, but George C. Scott is about to defend, with his life, a bridge in the last war with Germany. Actors impersonating combat—the agonies of death and the glory of victory—have been made ridiculous by documentaries. We are all too familiar with the facts to take seriously the spectacle of an actor pretending to die in an artificial trench.

•

So, I aim at a longer working day and get unhappily overexcited. I don't find the serenity that I seem to remember while working on "Falconer." It could be a simple question of health, or how many cups of coffee I drink. I cycle the new route, and toward dark and with this room at long last quite warm I seem to enjoy some repose.

•

I am at loose ends. I go to A.A., this in the parish-house kitchen, an interior that is of first importance to no one. Rummage sales, festivals, and door-to-door fund-raising resurrected the place ten years ago, but now half the fluorescent lighting blinks erratically and half the cabinet doors hang askew. So people talk with absolute candor about the bewilderments of life. "Yesterday was a memory, tomorrow is a dream," says a man who is dressed like a gas pumper and has only three front teeth. From what text, greeting card, or book he took the message doesn't matter to me at this hour.


Anne Burgess

•

So, I wake this morning and think, What but a truly great country could freely elect for its Chief Executive a faded and elderly cowboy actor whose veins are so calcified and whose memory is so depleted that he can seldom remember the armchair opinions he expressed at yesterday's lunch?

•

And walking and bicycling and wandering I think myself a bad father, and I think that this decision is to be made not by me but by my sons, and I think that by commenting on my loves and my deepest anxieties I jockey myself into the position of a bystander, a traveller, even a tourist, for by claiming to enjoy a degree of perspective I seem to be planning to move on to some other country. I like to think that this is a passing depression, and that I will live the role of a father with the authority of true love and truly be a man of my time and my place.

•

The drug I take for epilepsy seems to leave me rather sleepy and unresponsive. That seems to be my message for the day.

•

This is my eighth or ninth day on Dilantin, and I feel poorly. I am expected to pick up my medical records, take the dog to the veterinarian, and find someone to drive me to the hospital for my chat with a leading neurologist. I don't seem able to do much else, although I will try to answer the mail.

•

There is a story in the *Times* about toxic waste being buried across the river. I might be able to use this. One novel begins with the Fourth of July, one with Christmas Eve, one with the introduction of a man from the upper classes into a penitentiary, and I would

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like this to open with nothing less urgent. There is the old man and his skating and the news that the pond is poisoned. This is a possibility, but I don't feel it deeply. In the *New York Review of Books* I read a piece on the fact that the American people, in choosing Reagan, chose to vote for an irrecapturable past, a character who is no longer found among us, a landscape and a set of circumstances that vanished long ago.

•

It is that time of year when small colleges with American Indian names and low-digit R.F.D. addresses write to say that the faculty and the student body have enthusiastically chosen me to receive an honorary doctorate in humane letters. Yesterday I regretted two. As I tell it I will claim three.

•

So, at the mortal risk of narcissism, I am that old man going around and around the frozen duckpond in my hockey skates, stopping now and then to exclaim over the beauty of the winter sunset. And I am he who can be seen in the early summer morning, pedalling my bicycle to Holy Communion in a High church where they genuflect and use the Cranmer prayer book. I am also he whose loud cries of erotic ecstasy can be heard through the walls of the Millstream Motel. "You can't go on living like this," says my lover. I'm not quite sure what is meant.

•

So, the old man says, "None of you are old enough to remember the thrill of a consummate civilization. It was a passing phenomenon, rather like the pleasures of light, although we have come to know that light can move worlds. The dates are quite loose, but it would have been sometime between the two wars with Germany. It would be most obvious if you were a young man or woman from Oklahoma, or Salt Lake City, travelling to Paris, or Vienna, or even London. You would be leaving a painful condition of provincial loneliness for some capital city where men and women were all burgeoning in their relationship to one another, in their inventiveness in industry, the arts, and other forms of understanding, as if our lives might be something much more various than a paradise. It was a fact, happily remembered by other old men and women and authenticated by the legislation, the wealth, and the music and painting of that past. But it seems now that we have only our memories, and the provincial loneliness of Oklahoma has become universal."

The Lady!

•

I do have trouble with the dead hours of the afternoon without skating, skiing, bicycling, swimming, or sexual discharges or drink. I read some Graham Greene, whose mastery I admire, but at about twenty minutes to seven I suffer a loss of memory. I know, perhaps, who I am, but I am not very sure of my whereabouts. It may be of some significance that this always happens as I am called to the table. This time I find the seizure uncommonly depressing.

•

I wake terribly blue, and try to remember how often this has been the case; how often I have written about the man who cries at ballgames and Fourth of July parades. I think of how substantial is the gift of prayer; and I am on my knees. And I think of the susceptibility and loneliness of youth, of how this contributes to youth's drive and youth's beauty.

•

The last Sunday before Lent, and this is in haste. The light is brilliant, and my spirits are high, and since this is the first of the month I know these high spirits will be lasting. Remembering my letter to O'Hara, I think, on my knees in church, that I believe in narrative as invention. What I mean to say, of course, is that I believe in narrative as revelation. And in writing to Federico I would like to say something about our closeness having some of the elements of chance and that we are rather like travellers taking the same road, gifted or equipped with remarkable instruments of divination, since the road is seldom travelled, or at least gives that impression.

And it is with a marketplace that we confound those anthropologists who consider society to be largely a creation of anxiety, theft, and cowardice. We do not gather at that pass in the river to increase our numbers so we can defend ourselves from the tribes in the north. We gather here to exchange our potatoes for meat, our fish for baskets, and our greens for new breads. We are also gathered here to meet our wives, compete in contests of strength and skill, listen to the story-

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teller recount the night the wolves appeared, watch the thief's right hand be chopped off, and get fairly drunk. The fragrance of our social origins is what gives Buy Brite some of its excitement.

•

At the bank I see D.C., a slender black who does carpentry. "Nails have gone from ten cents a pound to a dollar thirty. You can't keep your head above water." An Irishman behind me, who excites my dislike, goes on about how terrible these times are. "Oh, they are terrible," says D. "All the governor wants to do is build prisons. And they sent that woman to prison for killing her lover, but I know a man who shot his friend right in the face and didn't get six months. He just paid off the right judge. You get three raps for stealing now, you get life. Life! Buddy's brother got three raps for stealing, and they locked him up for eighteen years. He had to serve twelve. But one of my girlfriends went for her vacation to this Arab country where if you steal anything they cut your hand off. I mean, you see a pocketbook lying in the street, you try to find out who it belongs to. You go into a store and you want to buy something and the owner isn't there, you go out in the street and find him. If you don't they'll cut your hand off." "I suppose," the Irishman says, "that the judges are corrupt, the lawyers are crooked, even the weather is worse than it used to be because of pollution, but if you buy one of them Japanese cars you'll throw ten Americans out of work. It's just terrible, everything is just terrible."

And only a few hours later an attempt is made to assassinate the President. That he rallies seems to me splendid. That the Chief Executive of a very great nation is felled by an assassin and before going into surgery says, "I forgot to duck," proves the inspired closeness of language and spirit. We seem perhaps closer to the light than we were in St. Petersburg and Sarajevo.

•

So I sit at the kitchen table, drinking black coffee and thinking of Verdi. Through government aid I heard, in the last week, the last scene from "Il Trovatore" and the Requiem Mass. And so I think of the enormous contribution Verdi made to the life of the planet and the enormous coöperation he was given by orchestras and singers and the enthusiasm of audiences. And I think what an enormous opportunity it is to be alive on this planet. Having myself been cold and hungry and terribly alone, I think I still feel the excitement of an opportunity. The sense of being with some sleeping person—one's child or one's lover—and seeming to taste the privilege of living, or being alive. This sense of privilege or opportunity seems to hint, and no more than hint, at other worlds around us. This seems a singular experience.

My neck is lame; and last night I read at the church and lost the last page. What is there to say of the evening? My wife seems to be quite simply the air I breathe. It is a spring night, a lovely spring night. We walk from the church to the club, and at the foot of the street one can see the full sky, a wall of light.

•

So, this is upon my return from a week or so in the hospital. There was an early morning when I suffered intense pain. Then there was that part of my consciousness that declared that I was not alone. When I asked who was with me I was told that it was God. It made the pain much easier to bear. When there was another seizure, an hour later, the knowledge that I was not alone was a powerful support.

So, on waking I think of completing the book, but now I feel an invalid. Reading Calvino, who is very close to Pirandello—a master—I find him unsympathetically cute. I am in the wrong country, but I shall return.

So, since sickness seems to be no part of the story I hope to tell, I have almost nothing to say this morning. I finish the Calvino book, which I think one should read, although I find it terribly arch. I play a recording of myself reading "The Swimmer" and think it quite good. I watch the Yankees play in Detroit—before an empty stadium, because everybody in Detroit is broke. Waking, I hear first the five-axle, eighteen-wheel trucks of dawn and then the first birds to sing at daybreak. I seem to hold Mrs. Z. in my arms; and it seems that all one ever wanted was a blonde whose breasts were a little larger than one remembered them. That my claim to simplicity can be challenged is well known. However, this seems to be the destiny I seek—or the past I instinctively recall—as I lie in bed in the first of the daylight admiring the songbirds.

•

I go to the doctor, who does something I see no reason to describe; but I feel much better. Indeed, I feel myself this morning. Mary seems bewildered, and when I think that I am not alone in this dilemma I may be sentimental, but it does give me some latitude, or—you might say—generosity. So there is a great deal to do.

A Turkish murderer, escaped from an Istanbul prison, attempts to assassinate the Pope. "God have mercy on his soul" is what I say, and had I been asked for a reaction I would have said that I would pray. Many of the celebrities questioned speak of the chaos of the modern world. It seems to me that this is something one accepted years ago. It is a point of departure and not an observation. I will pray; I shall pray; I am praying.

•

So I think that "Oh What a Paradise It Seems" is completed. I will rewrite the supermarket story and whatever else seems mistaken, photocopy these, and try to find someone to drive me into the city. I do not want to take the train.

•

I take the dogs into the rainy woods and fertilize the rhododendrons, and, feeling poorly, I return to the house. The dogs are wet and muddy, and while they dry on the porch I put on the headphones of my tape player and listen to the Bach Concerto for Two Violins. I think the circumstances striking: an old man with two old and muddy dogs. He listens while two violin virtuosi perform one of the great masterpieces of Western civilization. He listens to this with headphones—

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he is quite alone in his enjoyment, and his aloneness in the rainy landscape is increased when the concerto ends and he hears the hearty applause of thousands, the noise as they get to their feet, and their shouting. He seems to laugh or cry. The dogs, who can hear nothing but the dripping of the rain gutters, look at me with concern. They are afraid, perhaps, that I have gone mad and will forget to feed them. Ben comes. We are both mistaken in thinking that this is Father's Day.

•

This is upon my return from two weeks in the hospital, and I feel as though I had returned from the grave. That the kidney that was removed was cancerous is something, it seems, given the opportunities I possess, that I could pass over lightly, but I am regrettably morose and self-indulgent about the possibility of my death. I pray that this will pass. On my last night in the hospital I slept without medicine. Waking a little before dawn, I went to the window. The room was air-conditioned and the window was sealed. There had been a thunderstorm, and there was some rainwater on the screen. There was light in the sky and there were lights and a few lighted boats along the western shore. When I returned to bed it seemed that these were lamps, maintained by some woman of a very gentle and beautiful disposition. Judging from her voluminous dark hair, lightly confined by tortoiseshell pins, I take it she was of my mother's generation, although she was quite plainly not my mother. I will always remember my mother climbing, fully dressed, into that barrel in which she conquered Niagara Falls. I dwelt on the sweetness of this woman with her lamps, and I prayed for some degree of sexual continence, although the very nature of sexuality is incontinence.

•

The doctor removes the stitches. M. is late. One of the disadvantages of homosexual love is waiting for a man. Waiting for a woman seems to be destiny, but waiting for one's male lover is quite painful. He is twenty minutes late, but when he arrives he packs my things, oversees my departure from the hospital with tenderness and dispatch, points out interesting changes on the drive home while gently caressing my leg, and upon our return removes my clothes, washes and changes my bloody dressing, and delights and engorges my sexuality. The seriousness of this is something I have failed to assess. I hope and pray that the decisions I should make will be revealed. I do feel, this morning, that our being together for two weeks might make our parting intolerable. There are letters to write and bills to pay.

So the day passes on which I seem to have risen from the dead, but toward the end of the afternoon—well past its apex—I conclude that these are the last weeks or months of my life. There seems to be some genuine fatigue and sadness here, as well as some contemptible narcissism. Self-love, one reads, is characteristic of our time; and here is self-love at its most intense. I will not live to see my dearly beloved son marry in February because I would be more successfully conspicuous if I died. This is, of course, loathsome, but

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I seem to lack the vitality at 11 A.M. to say so.

•

I lunch with my old friend D., who helps to lighten my depression. Perhaps a year ago he spoke openly of his homosexual liaisons, but now the subject is avoided. Sitting on the porch, reading, in the late afternoon—perhaps at that mysterious hour when one is given an unwanted insight into the tedium of life—I clearly remember being an unwanted child on a hot afternoon when I seemed to find the world more detestable than the world found me. The contempt *was* mutual. I go to A.A. and I am astonished to realize that this is not a social gathering. Why else should men and women meet with one another but to make friends or find lovers? But we are gathered together to save one another from alcoholic suicide. "I have been in mental institutions four times," says a woman with a peaked head. Had T. been there she might have said, competitively, that she had been in mental institutions six times, but dear T. was not with us. She is very likely in a mental institution for the seventh time. One might say that these people are failures, and they are indeed—I seek out evidence of their having failed—but these are my most important companions. We do not meet as travellers, as people buying and selling, or as a group galvanized by some profession, or some condition such as poverty or wealth. We do not meet as people would in a museum, or a ruin; we are not thrust together by some natural disaster such as an earthquake, or a flood. We are gathered here together because we are drunkards.

•

I have done the wash, had the oil changed in my car, bought a loaf of French bread, taken the garbage up the hill, and last night I had a dream that a brilliant reviewer pointed out that there was an excess of lamentation in my work. I had, fleetingly, this morning, a sense of the world, of one's life, one's friends, and one's lovers as givens. Here it all is—comprehensible, lovely, a sort of paradise. That this will be taken quite as swiftly as it has been given is difficult to remember.

•

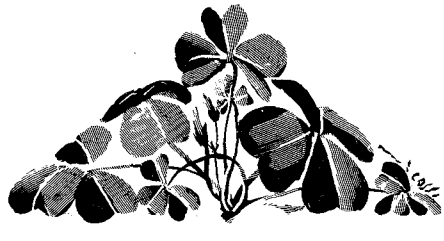
For dinner, we go to the B.s', where we have lobster that leaves us both a little ill. Ill or not, I wake with the full taste of a depression in my mouth. These are good friends, old friends, and I find our host delightful, but we talk mostly, as old people will, about the decline in services—in this case, medical care—during our lifetime, and I am more of an observer than a participant in this, the only world of its kind that I will ever know. In talking I forget what it is that I was talking about. I am very reluctant to say that I have forgotten what I was talking about, but that is the case. The stratifications of memory that are revealed at this time of life can be bewildering. I presently find my way back into my own conversation, but I am embarrassed to have admitted for, I think, the first time that cliché of old age: "And now I have forgotten what I meant to say."

•

Waking around six, I think that the damage to my memory—and there has been some—is a matter of fatigue, and that when I am rested I am given the illusion of being in command and feel self-possessed. But then I feel like one of those old men one reads about in the family-interest columns in afternoon papers. Grampa is having a struggle with age. Gramp doesn't want to grow old. Gramp doesn't understand that even the stars in heaven have their time of brilliance and then grow old. Oho.

•

My thinking continues to lack resilience, and I guess it could be my blood count. But when I wake this morning and feel the old dog pushing against this bed I feel some deep and simple love for the animal, and that reminds me of the love one feels for other women and men. The word "dear" is what I use: "How dear you are." It is the sense of moving the best of oneself toward another person. I think this was done most happily within my marriage, although I do remember being expelled to sofas in the living room, although not before the years had passed. I do recall the feeling of moving, rather like an avalanche, toward Mary.



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Susie and Tad arrive, and we lunch out. I am very pleased with their company. The day is overcast. Now and then it rains. This is officially summer's end, and have I had a summer's day? Of course. I have scythed the woods and picked peas. That I can't, this morning, remember a summer's day is unimportant. I buy fruit for S., lose my gas cap, and look for it along the road shoulders thinking that I am Johnny Cheever, lucky Johnny Cheever, to whom no harm will ever come. I am tailed by a black who is drinking whiskey out of a bottle in a paper bag. I do not find the gas cap, but I have the luck to be able to purchase one. I bring S. her fruit, and walk the dogs in what seems now to be an early darkness. There are hurricanes in Bermuda and the wind here in the trees seems autumnal. The ballgame is rained out and I, with the old dog, go to bed at nine.

•

So the fragrance of Concord grapes at the turning of the stairs here—a strong perfume, and very like the foxy smell of wild grapes—reminds me of my youth in southern Massachusetts, when this fragrance and the deepening odor of smoke from the leaf fires that were so much a part of our lives in the past established the weeks of autumn and led us into the excitement of an early snow.

•

It is a splendid autumn day in the Northeast, and I would like to describe it to my dearly beloved son in California. It is one of those days when the massiveness of the clouds, travelling in what appears to be a northerly direction, gives one the feeling of a military evacuation, a hastening, a change in campaign maneuvers; and the clarity of the light gives the mountains—and later in the day the walls of the city—such an air of revelation that one sees how susceptible we are to the powers of light. We drive to the city. How long has it been since driving was my manifest responsibility? How unnatural it seems for me to be my wife's passenger! In the city where I have lived for so many years I feel myself

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a stranger. I remember hearing, when I was a young man, the voice of someone as old and provincial as I saying, "Hurry, hurry, hurry—that's all they can think of."

•

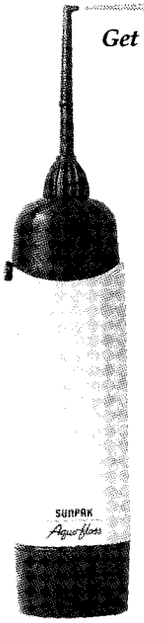
So my wife seems more depressed this morning than she has seemed since my first epileptic seizure. What a sentence with which to begin a story! One would want to bring to this situation only largeness. I prepare her breakfast tray, as has been the custom for these last months. She stumbles into the kitchen and prepares a second breakfast tray. When I point out that a tray is already prepared she replies in a voice that rises close to a scream, "I'm sorry! I'm sorry! I'm sorry!" But I can recall her father stumbling through his wife's bridge party in a bathrobe, and her sister's hysterics. And I remember our younger son saying, "She is not like this."

•

So my wife, unable to speak to me, can now be heard. She opens her window and exclaims, "Oh, beautiful mockingbird! Oh, beautiful mockingbird outside my window!" How very important women are.

•

The day is brilliant, and so is the foliage, although much of the color has fallen to the ground. We think of the autumn foliage as a beauty limited to the northeastern United States, but surely those countries that introduced brilliantly colored and patterned carpets must have had an autumn with brightly colored fallen leaves. How else could the Persians have hit on the idea of gold and crimson underfoot? On the hill above the old 1840 dam are tall trees, still filled with golden leaves. These are the colors of victory. Victorious armies, emperors, governments, and football teams have raised these colors. Winning is what these colors seem to signify. These conquerors' colors are carried across the landscape as far as I can see. The redness of the marshes makes the blueness of the water seem to be a thrusting force, and the splendor of the landscape is emphatic; but I am an old, old man—and it was so different in my youth—who finds that the bounty and splendor of the world fail to cleanse the thoughts of his heart. My heart



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is in some motel room, howling at a consummate lewdness. However, having tried seems to be an accomplishment in itself.

•

On waking I think that what has tired me in the last forty-eight hours is the absence of anything that strikes me as truly genuine. The people who interview me are sincere, sympathetic, and interesting, but there is something intrinsically artificial in our meeting. In any case, I find myself greatly fatigued, and I do remember feeling this weary before under the same circumstances. So I am pleased to make coffee in the kitchen and chat with the old dog. I am Bette Davis and the old dog is Geraldine Fitzgerald in the last scene of "Dark Victory." "Now we have to learn to live again," says the old dog, and I say, "If I can laugh I can live." I then begin to laugh, quite tirelessly, while the crawl credits—which are, in this case, exhaustive—commence.

•

The first day of the new year in New York Memorial Hospital. I am confronted with the fact that I cannot type very well. There is some damage to my dexterity. The confusion of the experiences that I have travelled through in the last month has led me to ask if such truths, mostly dealing with the ardor with which we pursue life at a medical level, are not in some way dim. Now that I know a little more about a life of quiet desperation, lived hourly in fear of death by suffocation, I seem to have learned nothing. What I mean to say is that I associate rapture with truth. Truth has, I think, the sense of revelation and light, and I seem to find no lightness in sitting for hours—hours—in what seem to be basements, dressed in those rags that are mandatory hospital dress, listening to everlasting vulgar and banal music, and waiting my turn at having a bolt of cobalt fired through my diseased bones.

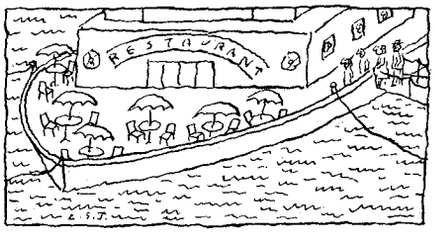
•

Long before dawn I hear a voice whisper, "Oh, my love." It is very faint—that whispered love we give mostly, I think, to children. But I find this morning that it is the woman next door. She wears the sort of high heels Roman prostitutes struggled with ten years ago, and her hair is a completely improbable mound of honey-colored glory, but this whisper of love is the closest I will come to reality all night.

•

The day seems unilluminated and quite humorless. The cardiac echo is given to me by a couple I will describe as a self-important young black and a homosexual. I have encountered nothing in the force of nature that would explain the homosexual's pristine boyishness. I can imagine no chain of events that would produce a voice that seemed so caressing. This examination takes close to an hour, and I am told that it was a success. Later, I have a bowel movement, which seems to me of the first importance. R. comes to pay me a call. I then go down to the second floor to have an injection that will make it possible to photograph my bones. In the waiting room we joke about how our hair falls out in clumps. M. pays me a call. I then return to have my bones photographed. It is the end of the day, and I feel deeply depressed. Men and women are going home from work. I see them in the hallway, including an intelligent and charming acquaintance. Those word combinations and tunes that threaten to dislocate my memory begin to appear. I suffer a collapse of vision and humor. I walk alone to the elevator and return alone to my room.

This aloneness usually pleases me, but not at this hour. I say that there is too much je ne sais quoi in my affairs and that I will return to drink. That this is a great immoral madness I well know. I see an Alexander Calder on the wall and think that Sandy drank all his life, but I forget that he was not a drunkard as I am. I suffer a gruelling loss of perspective. My beloved daughter comes and she is a sort of paradise. I bask in the many kinds of radiance she seems to bring into the room. But when she leaves I am again tired and humorless. I watch a new TV show and find myself very nearly close to intellectually incompetent. I



go to bed unwashed and am forced to settle for an incantatory way of thinking. "I lie naked and warm in a dark room," I repeat to myself until I fall asleep. When I wake at one I continue this incantation. I seem not to enjoy the intellectual latitude that would allow me anything broader than this chant. Toward dawn I have a clean and boisterous dream about being stranded with some very friendly people in the village of Oristano. So carry on. My dearly beloved wife is coming to visit.

•

Rather late on Tuesday night Y. announces that I will go home in the morning and return on Monday for X-rays. M. cheerfully agrees to drive into the city. My feelings are highly confused. At seven in the morning a nurse summons me for a heart scan. I insist on shaving, and after going down to the labyrinthine second floor I find that no one is ready. However, more and more patients are brought in to wait. The sense of waiting, the equilibrium given by the lonely woman behind her desk when she tells some suffering character to sit down and wait, could be investigated by my friend L. When the test is done and I have returned to my room, there is another journey to be made. I must have further chest X-rays. Here again there are delays, delays that might seem to have been generated by the nature of mass medical examination. I return alone to my room on foot. M. arrives at around eleven and packs up my clean and dirty clothing, my leftover food, my shaving things. It is hard for me to remember anyone's having done this for me before. It may have been done by one of my sons. As I sit in the lobby waiting for M., a woman, quite badly crippled by illness, says to her husband, "You know, sitting here waiting, I'm having strange thoughts. Just sitting here gives me strange thoughts." We drive out of the city. I find the return quite overwhelming and look for an old vial of Valium. It is not where I remembered leaving it, on the windowsill, and I think then that perhaps I hid it in some clothing. While my beloved wife and my good friend set the table for lunch I conclude that I will simply spend the rest of my life under the happy power of drugs. That this is obscenely self-destructive seems a possibility. The

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pain in my chest is, at this hour, my main occupation.

•

Waking, I see the heavy snow and think first that while I was never a great skier, the slopes at Stowe were the most professional I ever attacked and that I managed them poorly. There is no inch of maneuverable snow I have ever skied that I don't cherish. There is no inch of maneuverable snow that I have ever run that I don't remember with fondness. Then I think that this is the very first snowfall of my long life in which I have not been able to participate in some way. Skiing, or coasting, or shovelling the walks. I say this to the dogs while I drink my coffee, and it is perhaps their imperturbability that leads me to ask, Whatever made me think that I would live forever?

•

Some lawyers come to talk about my will and my taxes, and I don't find them tiring. I eat a bowl of chicken soup, and sleep, and when I wake my chemistry seems, for the first time in months, to have arrived at harmonious proportions. I am given the gift of feeling myself. I tell my wife that at twenty minutes to three on January 21st it was decided that I would not die. I am contented and deeply grateful for this. The sensible thing seems not to exploit the sense of contentment. I stay warm and listen to a Brandenburg Concerto. I have a good dinner and then hear the Stern–Perlman–Zukerman virtuoso piece, which along with my fortunate chemistry genuinely delights me. I sleep well enough, but my chemistry in the morning is a little less than limpid. I am expecting a lover and I think continually of his various organs. It is interesting to observe that a man who is very near to death will lose none of his sexual ardor. If I said to you, "I know an old man who keeps in the crook of some tree photographs of naked young men with stiff pricks," what would you say? You would not say anything, of course; you would walk away. But I think I do have something to say, and I will say it on yellow paper.

•

But on the voyage of this maimed ship I seem to have nothing to enter in the log. I have done my obscenities, which seem to me of some importance, but which this morning bore me. The voyage has, from time to time, been serenely free from the unconscionable boredom of unwanted lewdness. I truly think my health has improved.

•

We take a nap after lunch. I accelerate mine with a sleeping pill and enjoy a well-constructed siesta. We climb the treacherous hill together, and I drive Mary to her garage. It will be the second time in a month that I have seen the mountains. Here and there, barbershops that call themselves "hair stylists" have opened, and Mary asks at one of these if they will cut my hair. The price is fourteen dollars. I find another who asks twelve, and I am agreeable. "I used to be a barber," he said, "before I became a hair stylist." In any case, he cuts my hair. On leaving him I drive to find a garage that will repair the Volkswagen windshield wiper. It is a substantial exertion to get my game leg in and out of the car. At the second garage, after earnest research, they conclude that I need a new part. How admirable they are, I think, how dedicated to the maintenance of cars, and I do glimpse a tasteful buttock and wonder, alas, if this may have something to do with my sickness.

•

My daughter is at the hospital and I will not approach a description of her helpfulness. Both she and M. support me through rather a difficult interview. The medicine I have been taking for the last month has done nothing to block the cancerous tumors, and on Tuesday I will take up another course of medicine. So we drive home.

•

There is very bad news from the doctor, and Mary and I embrace and weep. I seem perhaps unable to type, but if I tried I might be able to master the engine; I guess it would be some other morning of my life.

•

This is two weeks and three cobalt treatments later. These landscapes don't, I think, lie particularly in my terrain. One could write about an old man or an old woman with a stick waiting out the later afternoons in those outpatient rooms where the mu-

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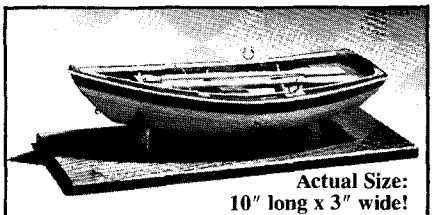

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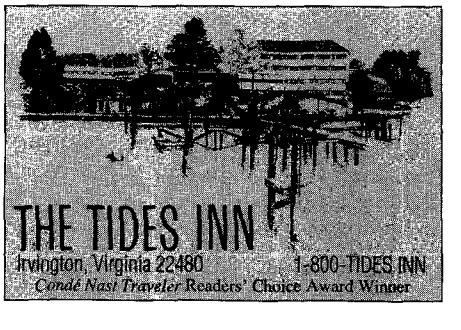

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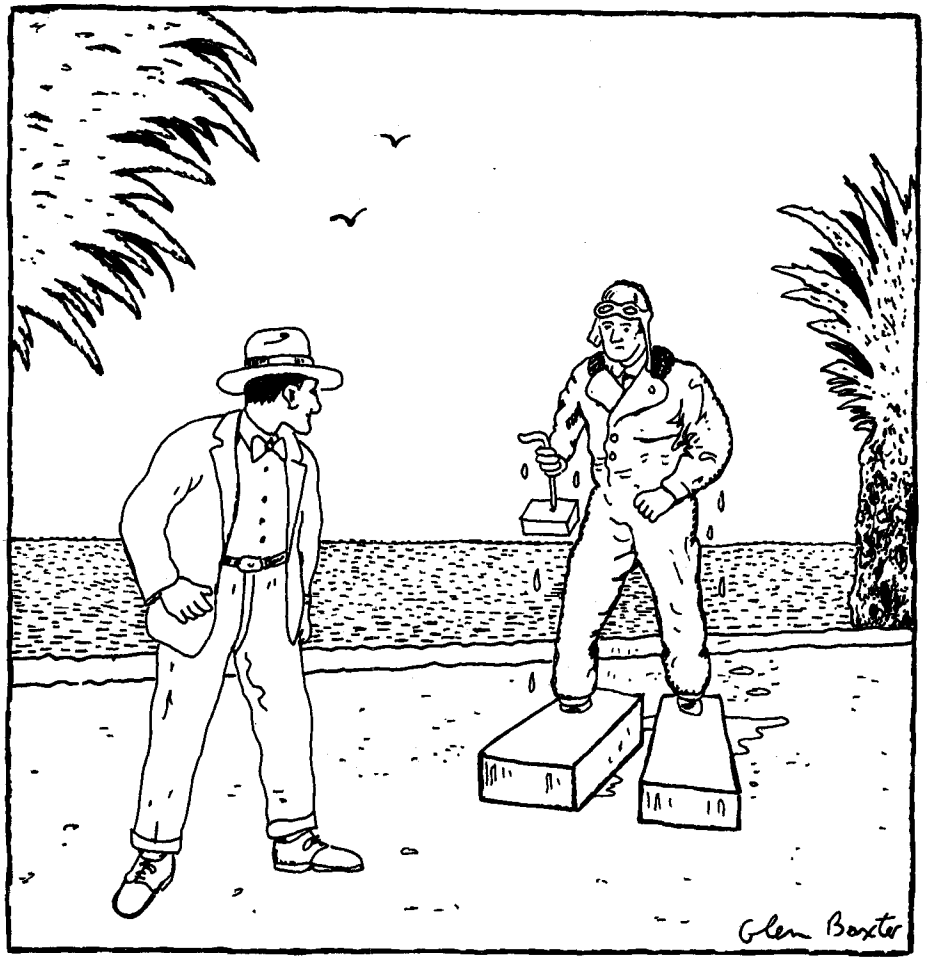

"SO, CLUMPY McPHERSON! WE MEET AGAIN, EH?" RASPED THE BURSAR.

•

sic is tireless and vulgar, where the woman whose taste chose the pictures on the walls and subscribed to the dog-eared magazines has long since gone to other pursuits, and where one waits for ever and ever to hear one's name or number. There is that laundry basket full of toys in that room where tiny children are given curing applications of electricity that would illuminate a large city. If this were all some part of a journey one of my characters was obliged to make I would be fairly well informed.

•

The day of the wedding. Federico first calls about the receipt of a telegram, and I am, of course, happy to talk with him. I then wait for the family to call when the ceremony is completed. It is not my best self that reports this. They call. Mary, to my delight, has been crying. Now they are drinking wine, and there will be a large dinner. I consider my son's judgment in his choice of a wife to be highly mature. M. and I have a dinner of steak, bright-orange fried onion rings, and a salad with a commercial dressing. I go to bed almost at once and sleep soundly. Of our friendship I can say mostly that we are like travellers who help each other along the way. This is a journey, not a domicile. He helps me much to correct my handicaps and overcome the obstacles in my journey.

•

This morning I would like to write about a victor. It was in the big hospital, and in one of those rooms where we waited, twenty or thirty of us, either to see if our various organs were strong enough to withstand the rigorous medicines that would be prescribed or to get applications of the medicines themselves. The reproductions on the walls had been chosen with that anxious and sensitive care that I had found in all the rooms. There was a Hopper, a Redon, a Grandma Moses, and an Andrew Wyeth; there was something for almost everyone. On the tables the usual litter of magazines reminded one of the fact that the weekly periodical seems to have a less natural place in things—seems to enjoy less endurance—than the leaves that fall to the ground in autumn. Here on the covers were yesterday's faces, some of them already forgotten, some of them assassinated, and a few of them crowned.

We were a mixed company of about twenty—some of us in street clothes but most of us in those ragged hospital overalls. We held the large key rings and crude wooden tags that would make it impossible for us to lose our locker keys or have them purloined. The music tape being played was simply banal. A woman came in from the street, a well-dressed, good-looking woman. It has seemed to me, in my long life, that all well-dressed, good-looking women share certain fundamentals. There is to such a woman's carriage, to the cut and hang of her clothing, an inimitable naturalness that is close to classical. The stranger enjoyed this. She gave the congregation a light and general smile and took off her coat and her hat. She was as bald as an egg. So were at least a third of us, but her beauty dramatized her loss. It was not the baldness of this stranger that was most striking, however; it was the look of absolute victory on her face. She had been infected by cancer; she had scourged the infection; and she had simply returned for a checkup. The look on her face, her air of having bested the tumors and carnage of the disease were beautiful. She was called in before the rest of us, and politely explained that she was here for a checkup. It was very brief. "Thank you for waiting," she said when she put on her coat and then her hat, resuming her beauty and her ordinariness. It may have been a turning point in my own cure that I saw this victorious woman.

•

And it was Mrs. T. who always spoke enthusiastically of platinum. "In ten days now," she said, "I go back to the hospital for my platinum." I don't know, but my guess is that she would be enthusiastic about almost everything: the local train service, the local vegetables, the local flora. "Of course

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I'm enthusiastic about platinum!" she exclaimed. "After all, platinum saves my life. It is platinum that can separate, disintegrate, and destroy those tumors that once threatened my life. Platinum in this case is a force of goodness. Platinum is a force of life. Platinum is quite simply for me the difference between life and death, and I love it."

•

This is the fifth day on which I feel like myself. I imagine that the feeling will continue and that the doctor will conclude that small doses of platinum are what is needed. Once every six weeks.

•

I have the news of shrinkage, and this is the best news I've put down here in months. My various aches and pains seem not cancerous and thus unimportant. M. is expected on the morning train, and I will be pleased to see him.

•

I come here without having seen the *Times*, which is very sensible of me. I don't seem able to anticipate the limits on my strength, but it is limited. The doctor says that he thinks he can keep the cancer at the point of remission where it stands today. M. comes out, and to hold his hand is to lighten the pain of my disease. In the literature there is a good deal about the healing powers of love and openness. We are not so much loving as savage together, but the consequence, when he goes off to buy chemical fertilizer, is that I lie in the afternoon sun quite contented and happy. He has a healing power for me. I find nothing mysterious about this, and I like to think that no dependence is involved.

•

I might be described as *un homme du siècle* since I live a short distance from a nuclear reactor that has twice been closed down (for hazardous emissions) by a federal commission; the drinking water from the well that was dug twenty-five years ago by a dear friend has lost its savor and sweetness and taken on the flavor of those pollutants and corrosive chemicals that infect the earth; and I myself am so badly crippled with bone cancer that I walk with crutches. But to blame this on our time would seem to me an example of destructive and passive pessimism.

•

I choose to see the doctor's suspension of platinum not as the blessing it is but as an admission of the fact that platinum is not working. This puts me into a profound depression, in which I remain this Saturday morning. I think of the courage of my associates, of my closest associates, but the most I seem able to do is to admire their resources. I shall stay warm and read about maps.

•

A very heavy snow begins to fall at a little before midnight. This is the fifth of April. By the next morning, it is a foot or two of powder snow. Legally, it is a blizzard. To remember the pleasures of a storm when I was younger, I shovel the stairs and clean the snow off the cars. The snow falls so swiftly that I do this three times in the afternoon. The fall of snow stops about as night falls.

•

In the morning I wake feeling that my illness is a thing of the past. I have not felt so well in weeks. This seems not only well-being but an intelligent grasp of the fact that when I am in the best of health I often suffer profound depressions, random and unsuitable erections, and losses of memory. In any case, I feel that the cancer has been defeated; and perhaps it has. So, feeling that I have conquered cancer, I stroll happily around the house. A loaf of bread is needed, and I will search for one. What more simple and universal pursuit could there be than a man looking for a new loaf of bread? The last of the unseasonable snow has melted and there is a curious greenness of fragrance in the air that represents what?—Death! I have not conquered cancer; I have merely worsened. So off I go to the supermarket, which is closed. The sight of this place without lights, without delivery trucks, and without a full parking lot is like some apocalyptic vision. In this society, in this world, at this time of day, finding the supermarket closed is an upheaval. I go to the lesser, and the losing, market and hope deeply that it will not have been forced to stay open in competition; but it too, happily, is

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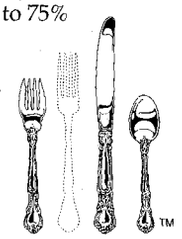
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closed. Christ the Lord is risen. It is at the bakery that I find the new bread. And how for me a bakery is the heart—and sometimes the soul—of a village! I remember the bakery in the little town north of Rome. I remember stopping at a restaurant in Romania with C. and being told that we could not yet have lunch; the bread hadn't been baked. One smiles at the girls in the bakery and wishes them a happy Easter.

•

What I am going to write is the last of what I have to say, and Exodus, I think, is what I have in mind. In the speech on the 27th I will say that literature is the only consciousness we possess, and that its role as a consciousness must inform us of our inability to comprehend the hideous danger of nuclear power. Literature has been the salvation of the damned; literature has inspired and guided lovers, routed despair, and can perhaps, in this case, save the world.

•

The second Sunday after Easter, I attend church for the first time since the doctor declared me dead of cancer. I kneel, hoping to enter a larger realm of humility and gratitude than I might find alone. The altar is a blaze of light. How golden is the light of the candles! G. is bossy and stands determinedly during the collection, although this is not one of the rituals of our church.

•

I claim that illness has kept me from writing here for several weeks. On Monday M. takes his telephone receiver off the hook. He calls, shortly before I employ someone else. He drives us to town in a heavy rain and this is a pleasure. There is a reception at the Locust Club, which is of no particular consequence; and we have dinner at a French restaurant into which the customers seem to have strayed. That is charming. Driving home in the rain is lovely. M. spends the night at the house, and I am pleased to think of him sleeping under my roof. Off we go again in the middle of the afternoon, when I receive a medal and the family is together. M. drives us back, and while I miss the rain we had last time, I deeply enjoy having him as a driver. We part tenderly on Wednesday, and I think it is on Friday that I ask R. to come for a visit. He is a pleasant young man about whose way of life, whose friends, I know nothing and can imagine nothing. Carnally the drive is very ardent, and we end up in a heap of brush before lunch. I find my orgasm very gratifying and very important. We lunch together, chat, and I put him on a train, but I seem in my ardor to have pulled my chest out of line. This is quite painful. On Monday I go to the doctor, who finds nothing serious; but this morning I find my breathing constricted, and I will now take a little rest.

•

For the first time in forty years I have failed to keep this journal with any care. I am sick. That seems to be my only message. I must, this morning, call the broker, order stationery, and have my watch fixed. I will now lie down.

•

I have climbed from a bed on the second floor to reach this typewriter. This was an achievement. I do not understand what has happened to the discipline, or character, that has brought me here for so many years. I think of an early dusk, the day before yesterday. My wife is in the upper garden planting something. "I want to get these in before dark," she will have said. A light rain, a drizzle, is falling. I can remember planting at this hour and in this weather, although I can't remember what it was I planted. Rhubarb or tomatoes. Now I am undressing to go to bed, and my fatigue is so overwhelming that I am undressing with the haste of a lover. I have never known anything like this fatigue. I feel it in the middle of dinner. We have a guest to be driven to the train, and I begin to count the number of spoonfuls left on his dessert plate. There is his coffee to finish, but happily he has taken a small cup. Even before this is empty I have him on his feet for the train. It will be for me, I know, twenty-eight steps from the table to the car, and, after he has been abandoned at the station, another twenty-eight steps from the car to my room, where I tear off my clothes, leave them in a heap on the floor, turn out the light, and fall into bed.

—John Cheever

(*This is the second of two parts.*)

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THE SKY LINE

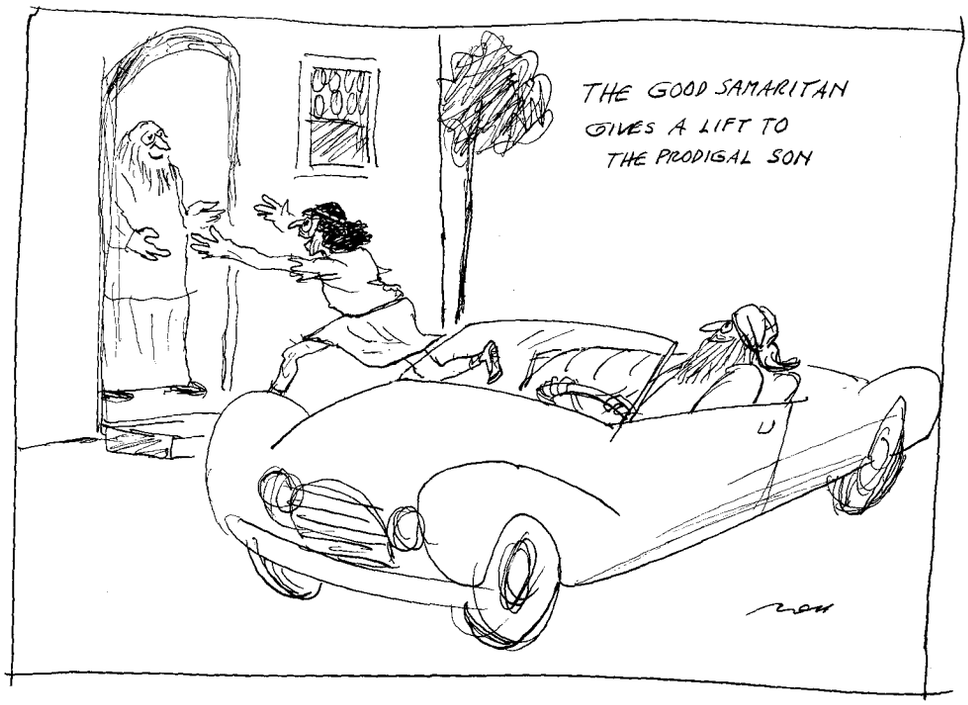
Improving Lincoln Center

DANIEL H. BURNHAM used to say that seventy-five per cent of an architect's success lay in his ability to go out and get the job. The first question for a layman to ask after the architect has got the job and has seen it completed is "Does it work?" Architects are apt to object to this question. To them it implies that something has gone wrong—that the completed project *doesn't* work. Immediately, they assume a defensive posture, prepare to do battle. The layman, having learned that his simple question transforms him into an adversary, politely gives up asking it, and so a large number of architectural projects are praised or damned merely on the strength of their appearance—usually a matter of whatever shapes, colors, and materials happen to be in or out of fashion at a given moment.

This is what happened with Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. The efforts made in the late nineteen-fifties to bring it into existence were so arduous that even to have asked whether it was wise to put so many of New York City's cultural eggs in one basket would have seemed downright churlish. A single large basket at least held a better chance of raising the necessary amount of money—well over a hundred and eighty million dollars—than any number of small separate baskets would have; also, settling on one site seemed a more practical way to confront and resolve the usual problems of any large-scale real-estate transaction. And an appearance of practicality was important, because not-for-profit cultural institutions have long been thought to lack this characteristic (while large public corporations, however far gone in fiscal fantasy they may be, are generally assumed to possess it). There was still another reason for creating a center: rightly or wrongly, institutions having little in common except that they bear the label "cultural" gain public attention and sympathy by clustering protectively together, like sheep in a fold cowering before the approach of wolves.

In order to do justice to the recent additions to the Lincoln Center complex—new buildings that are admirable not only for being exceptionally ingenious in their design but also for having made possible the carrying out of an architectural gesture of great daring—I must first take note of certain things that went wrong as, in the years that the center was under construction, its board of directors sought to balance a number of diverse daydreams against a few hard facts. By ill fortune, the very first daydream to give way to a fact was the ground plan. Lincoln Center covers an area of fourteen acres between Sixty-second Street and Sixty-sixth Street, facing Amsterdam Avenue to the west and, to the east, facing the perilous no man's land where Broadway intersects Columbus Avenue. Officially, the intersection is known as Lincoln Square, though nobody ever calls it that. (Why Lincoln? It is surmised that some now forgotten real-estate developer hoped the great man's name would lend a note of prestige to the neighborhood.) At the south end of this crisscross of Broadway and Columbus lies a tiny island of greenery called Dante Park, with a full-size bronze statue of Dante set in a grove of flourishing plane trees. (Why Dante? Again one draws a blank.) At the north end of the crisscross is a similar but even smaller triangle, which today serves to enshrine a bronze bust of the Metropolitan Opera's Richard Tucker.

It was originally estimated that at the height of the season between twelve and fifteen thousand people would be pouring into Lincoln Center almost every evening, for a total attendance of perhaps four or five million people a year—which is to say that everyone anticipated that traffic jams on a tremendous scale would be regularly generated on the perimeter of the center, and that pedestrians attempting to hurry across Broadway and Columbus Avenue on their way to and from it would often be placed in jeopardy of their lives. Plainly, the best solution to the problem of access would have been to roof over Columbus Avenue and Broadway, providing an immense raised plaza, which would extend all the way from Amsterdam Avenue to the east side of Broadway and would be restricted entirely to pedestrians. All the buildings could have been placed upon this single-level concrete platform—what architects in that era of mega-buildings were glibly calling a "pod." Cars heading for Lincoln Center could have travelled beneath this platform in an expanded version of the present subterranean approaches to the center's garages. (The traffic flow on Columbus Avenue and Broadway would have continued in its accustomed fashion, or perhaps in an improved fashion, since cars heading for Lincoln Center would have been filtered out of the mainstream of traffic at an earlier



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point.) The hard fact against which this attractive daydream was dashed appears to have been the conventional one of lack of money; looking back, we think with regret of how comparatively cheap the big plaza would have been to build.

Even the plaza as it was actually designed and constructed—with a baroquely tumultuous fountain by Philip Johnson at its center, the New York State Theatre, the Metropolitan Opera, and Avery Fisher Hall on the south, west, and north sides, and the Vivian Beaumont and Mitzi E. Newhouse Theatres on a spur to the north—proved faulty, in several respects. A few shallow steps leading up from the plaza to the forecourt of the Met were so frequently being stumbled on by unwary visitors that some years ago the plaza had to be rebuilt, with a gentle slope replacing the steps. Between Avery Fisher Hall and the Beaumont Theatre is a large reflecting pool, in which sits a monumental bronze sculpture by Henry Moore, described by Moore himself as "a leg part and a head-and-arms part." The executive offices of Lincoln Center and of some of its constituent members were until recently located beneath the pool. Those quarters were a sorry makeshift; for many years, the pool leaked so badly that it had to be kept drained, to prevent water from seeping onto the heads of staff members at work in the windowless dungeons below.

Still more faults were to be found in the interiors of the various auditoriums making up Lincoln Center. The acoustics of Avery Fisher Hall, originally known as Philharmonic Hall, turned out to be so unsatisfactory that in the middle seventies a large portion of a gift of ten million dollars from the philanthropist Avery Fisher was used to gut and rebuild the auditorium. At the State Theatre, the acoustics were even worse, but since the auditorium was initially intended to serve dance groups, it was considered permissible to install miking. (Miking, which to most members of the older generation amounts to an exasperating betrayal of normal sound, is now omnipresent in New York theatres, and its continued use at the State Theatre when certain musical works are being put on has evidently come to seem, especially to younger audiences, a blessing instead of a curse.)

Acoustics were not a problem at the Metropolitan Opera House—in this respect the architect, Wallace K. Harrison, was more fortunate than his partner, Max Abramovitz, who designed Philharmonic Hall, and Philip Johnson and Richard Foster, who designed the State Theatre. Nevertheless, the garishness of the Met's red-and-gold interior decoration was widely deplored, and the most pleasing of its spaces—a modest and charming ground-floor bar-and-restaurant, designed by the late L. Garth Huxtable—soon yielded to a gift shop. The monotonously slotted exterior side walls of the Met—clad in travertine, like the other buildings—could easily be mistaken for those of a penitentiary. In the past year or so, some of the cladding has had to be replaced, and no doubt this costly task will have to be repeated again and again, with the buildings throughout Lincoln Center; travertine has proved less durable in our climate than in the climate of central Italy, where it is quarried.

The Vivian Beaumont Theatre is a curiosity. It was designed by the distinguished architect Eero Saarinen with the close assistance of Jo Mielziner, one of the leading stage designers of our time. It ought to have been among the best of our legitimate theatres; instead, it has proved irritating to a succession of impresarios, each of whom has complained of its poor sight lines, its inadequate knee space between seat rows, and the inutility of its vast backstage space. (The last fault was due to the presumption that Lincoln Center would have an established repertory acting group, and that the sets for as many as three or four plays would have to be stored backstage. Alas, the repertory group never came into existence.) Beneath the Beaumont is the much smaller Mitzi E. Newhouse Theatre. Because of its depth below ground and the steep rake of its auditorium, a prominent theatre critic once described it as "a vile pit." It combines the least attractive aspects of mountain climbing and speleology.

Wedged between the Beaumont and the Met is the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. Like the Guggenheim band shell, in Damrosch Park, to the south of the Met, it is an orphaned structure, to which a visitor finds his way with difficulty, and which even on the sunniest of days communicates a darkling air. Although it has its own theatre, suitable for movies and lectures, and its own quite ample exhibition spaces, the incoherence of its plan and the bad luck of having one of its entrances face the bland anonymity of Amsterdam Avenue and the other a cul de sac of Lincoln Center's plaza make many reluctant to take advantage of its incomparable collection of theatrical memorabilia.

Also unlucky in the placement of its entrances was the Juilliard School, designed by Pietro Belluschi. In order to link the Juilliard to the other buildings in the complex, a vast bridge, some ninety feet wide and two hundred feet long, was thrown across Sixty-fifth Street. The architect placed entrances to the Juilliard School, the Juilliard Theatre, and the adjacent Alice Tully Hall at street level, immediately under the bridge. This had one undoubted advantage: it provided ample cover for people entering and leaving the buildings in inclement weather. The advantage was rendered valueless, however, because the great length and width of the bridge turned that segment of Sixty-fifth Street into a forbidding cellar, artificially lit by day as well as by night. Its perennial gloom was deepened by the walls of the structures on both sides of the street, which were largely windowless and therefore inimical to passersby. (The urbanologist William H. Whyte has spent many years of his life inveighing against the inhumaneness of blank walls.) To make matters worse, where the walls opened up at all they did so only in order to provide entrances to the garages under Lincoln Center and to loading docks. What has the look of being a secondary entrance to Alice Tully Hall—a set of low doors tucked obscurely beneath an overhanging flight of stairs on Broadway—is, in fact, the main entrance. The flight of stairs had the appearance of a grand ceremonial approach to a building that, once one had mounted the stairs, turned out, to one's astonishment, not to exist: all that one had reached was a narrow balcony along the southern face of Tully Hall, which led to the bridge spanning Sixty-fifth Street; from the bridge one gained access to the portion of Lincoln Center containing the reflecting pool and its gummy Moore. A

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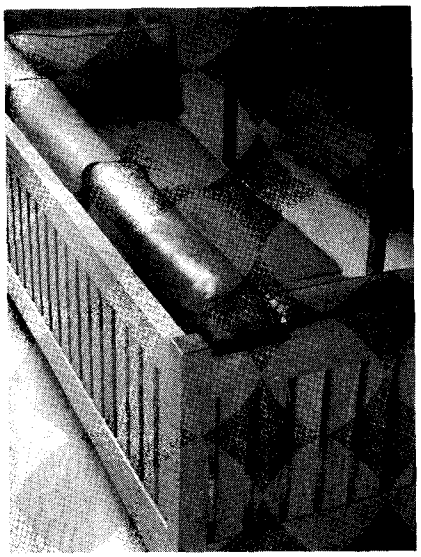
not dissimilar fate befell the Juilliard School: an unprepossessing entrance on Sixty-sixth Street served as the main entrance, and as a result the school appeared to have deliberately turned its back upon Lincoln Center in order to face the near-cipher of an ordinary Manhattan side street.

IN the early eighties, the board of directors of Lincoln Center felt obliged to confront the consequences of a quarter century of ever-increasing success. In spite of a host of difficulties—some, as we have seen, structural, and others institutional and ideological—it had become truly a citadel of culture in the heart of the city. Within the agglutinative embrace of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts were to be found the Metropolitan Opera, the New York Philharmonic, the Juilliard School, the Lincoln Center Theatre, the Film Society of Lincoln Center, the New York City Ballet, the School of American Ballet, the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, the New York City Opera, and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Several of these institutions had not existed at the time Lincoln Center was founded. (Indeed, it was a minor scandal even at the start that the one indisputably major new art form of the twentieth century—cinema—was apparently thought unworthy of being granted a place there.) By the eighties, nearly all these constituents were pleading, loudly and with reason, for more space. Their staffs were camping out in improvised, inefficient quarters. The Film Society had no theatre of its own, and not even a screening room for staff use. The School of American Ballet, which became a constituent in 1987, complained of inadequate studio space. The situation of the Juilliard School was especially urgent. Its eight hundred or so young students, arriving in New York City from all over the country, had reason to deplore the inconvenience (to say nothing of the threat of muggings and other street crimes) that resulted from their being housed in improvised dormitories situated at a distance from the school. Juilliard required secure housing for its students within the bounds of the center. It was also in need of living quarters for visiting artist-teachers, who might spend several weeks, or even a full semester, at the school.

Responding to all these needs, the Lincoln Center board of directors voted to set up a New Building Committee, under the chairmanship of a member of the board, Frederick P. Rose, a prominent real-estate developer. The committee was asked to judge the feasibility of expanding the center: If it should indeed expand, then upon how large a scale? What would the expansion cost, and where would the money be likely to come from? Much of the block between Sixty-fifth Street and Sixty-sixth Street that was not occupied by Alice Tully Hall and the Juilliard School had been occupied by the High School of Commerce, but the school had recently closed. Under an agreement negotiated many years earlier by John D. Rockefeller 3rd, the founding chairman of Lincoln Center, the city had promised to sell the old high-school property to the center for three and a half million dollars whenever it happened to become available. Surely this was an opportunity not to be missed.

After many months of investigation and much debate, the committee and its professional consultants arrived at the opinion that the cost of a new building large enough to satisfy the requirements of the many constituents of Lincoln Center was beyond its fund-raising ability. Nevertheless, if the option to purchase the high-school site were to be exercised, and if the center were also to buy a vacant lot lying between the school building and a firehouse on the southeast corner of Sixty-sixth Street and Amsterdam Avenue, a large parcel of land would result. The size of the building, or buildings, that the city's zoning laws would permit on the site would be greatly increased if the center were to buy from the city the air rights above the firehouse and add to them air rights above the Juilliard building which had remained unexploited at the time of its construction. A deal might perhaps be struck with a private developer, who would pay part of the cost of a not-for-profit institutional building on one part of the site as a reward for being allowed to build a very-much-for-profit residential skyscraper on another part of the site.

And then an even more attractive refinement of this proposal emerged from the committee's deliberations—a feat of real-estate sleight of hand so ingenious as to approach the metaphysical. It was devised in part by two



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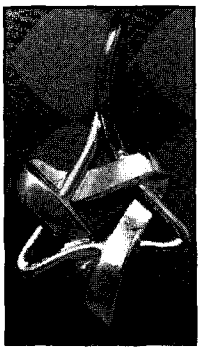

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of the committee's consultants—the legal counsel to Lincoln Center, Gordon Davis, of the law firm of Lord, Day & Lord, and Henry Hart Rice, the chairman of James Felt Realty Services—and in part by two architectural firms that the center, after holding an informal competition among a number of architects, had chosen to draw up preliminary plans: Davis, Brody & Associates, working in collaboration with Abramovitz, Harris, Kingsland Associates. The suggested refinement was to plan three buildings on the site instead of two: a so-called base building, which would include ten floors of labyrinthally interlocking institutional spaces, and, springing from the top of this base, two towers—one providing eighteen stories of dormitory space for the School of American Ballet and the Juilliard, and the other providing forty-five stories of condominium apartments. The condominium tower would have access to Lincoln Center by means of a lobby in the lower building (it would have its own entrance on Sixty-sixth Street as well), and it would be granted the right to bear the seductive address Three Lincoln Center; nevertheless, it would be an entirely separate enterprise, confined to an envelope of air rights that legally started sixteen stories above the ground and was owned not by Lincoln Center but by whatever real-estate developer was selected to build it. In effect, the developer would be holding title to air and building a castle in the air—one containing more than three hundred luxury apartments.

The price that the developer would pay for the right to build his castle would be sufficient to cover much of the cost of the base building and the dormitory tower. The developer would be expected to act as the contractor for the institutional sections of the mixed-use project, and Lincoln Center would act as the project's sponsor in guiding it through the inescapable bureaucratic ordeal known as the New York City uniform-land-use-review process. In October, 1985, some fifty real-estate concerns were invited to bid on the project. By January, 1986, five finalists had been picked, and in September, shortly after the project gained the final approval of the Board of Estimate, it was announced that the winning developer was the Stillman Group, whose headquarters are in Scarsdale. Though the Stillmans are relatively little known, they have been constructing commercial and residential buildings up and down the East Coast for over half a century and are among the country's sixty largest real-estate developers. The Lincoln Center project was the biggest—and certainly the boldest and the most complicated—that the Group had ever undertaken.

The Stillman Group paid approximately fifty million dollars for the right to build Three Lincoln Center. That was roughly a third of the estimated total cost of the base building and the dormitory tower, including the cost of an endowment for their maintenance. The remaining hundred million would have to be raised from donors, and to this end Fred Rose was persuaded to add, to the hat he was already wearing as chairman of the New Building Committee, that of chief fund-raiser for the new building. Between the groundbreaking, which took place in the fall of 1987, and the spring of 1990, eighty-five million dollars was raised. At a reception held on June 11, 1990, at Lincoln Center, it was announced that the largest single gift to the building fund—fifteen million dollars—had come from Fred Rose and his wife, Sandra; the base building and dormitory tower would be named the Samuel B. and David Rose Building, after Rose's father and uncle. "I wanted to keep the gift anonymous as long as possible," Rose said after the announcement. "I would have felt embarrassed prodding people into giving to a building that would eventually bear my family's name. Now that the building is almost finished and we have only a few million dollars left to raise, I feel much less worried about it."

THE Rose Building—as, inevitably, it has become known—rises just to the west of the Juilliard building, separated from it by a driveway that runs from Sixty-fifth Street to Sixty-sixth Street. Next year, the Riverside branch of the New York Public Library, now on Amsterdam Avenue at Sixty-ninth Street, will be moving to much larger ground-floor quarters in the corner of the Rose Building which faces Amsterdam Avenue at Sixty-fifth Street. A space nearby is reserved for the archives of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. On the southeast corner of Amsterdam and Sixty-sixth Street is the old firehouse, so adroitly encapsulated within the new building as to be rendered almost undetectable. The main lobby of the Rose Building is on the third-floor level of the base building and is reached by way of that daring architectural gesture which I see as radically improving not only the Juilliard building but the rest of Lincoln Center as well; to wit, an open-air promenade, four hundred and fifty feet long, beginning at the top of the flight of stairs affixed to the Broadway side of the Juilliard building (and belatedly providing those palatial steps with a worthy reason to exist), proceeding through a hollowed-out segment of the Juilliard, whose cantilevered upper stories partly shelter it from the weather, and ending in the Rose Building.

Architectural gestures on the scale of the promenade are rare, and are therefore well worth our attention; they are especially rare and especially gratifying when, as in the present instance, the architects have succeeded in creating an exhilarating new space within the framework of a defective old one. In the nature of things, any great city abounds with architectural blunders, but few of them are ever corrected, and few of the ones that are corrected become beautiful as well as useful in consequence. The blundering placement of the entrance to the Juilliard in the spooky street-level twilight under the Sixty-fifth Street bridge is now remedied: the entrance is being moved upstairs and will become one of several pleasing focal points along the promenade. Others are a new and much expanded Juilliard bookshop; a box office and lobby for the Film Society's new Walter Reade Theatre; a private elevator and escalator for the use of the occupants of Three Lincoln Center; and the lobby entrance of the Rose Building, whose elevators serve the intricately layered and dovetailed offices of many of the constituent members of the center.

The architects have taken care to make the promenade readily accessible from street level by installing glass-enclosed escalators at each end. (An elevator has also been provided for the handicapped.) In addition, they have taken care to put the new main entrance to the Juilliard on the axis of

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the Sixty-fifth Street bridge, whose deck, hitherto little used, has now become a terracelike extension of the promenade. Nearly half as long as the promenade and paved with handsome pinkish granite blocks, in its present incarnation how much more than a mere overpass it is! Already it has become a place in which to linger and talk, and one senses that someday, with the homely advantage of familiarity, it will serve as a sort of miniature campus for Juilliard, so obviously lacking any other. From the terrace the view is unexpectedly panoramic. One looks south over the Moore sculpture and its reflecting pool (successfully mended at last and brimful) to the boxy auditoriums of Lincoln Center, linked by plazas and ranks of trees; to the east one glimpses the stop-and-start traffic of Broadway, and, to the west, the Hudson and the ever-surprising closeness of the Jersey shoreline. Strolling along the promenade or idling upon its terrace, a visitor is put in mind of one of those blindingly white cities in the instep of the boot of Italy; the sun bounces with Mediterranean brio off the freshly cleaned travertine of the Juilliard and off the more durable Minnesota limestone of the Rose Building. Against the backdrop of the shadowy, dark brick striped vastness of Three Lincoln Center the dormitory tower appears agreeably domestic in scale.

As for Three Lincoln Center, despite its alluring location it has had the misfortune to open when the real-estate market in New York City is undergoing a severe depression. Well designed (Harman Jablin Architects did the interiors of the building and worked with Davis, Brody, et al. on the exterior), well constructed, and boasting such amenities as an Olympic-size swimming pool, Three Lincoln Center is hoping to survive the depression by offering its apartments for rent as well as for sale. Its construction made possible the completion of Lincoln Center in a form that will serve the center's purposes for decades to come. The founders of Lincoln Center had watched as a few hard facts destroyed a number of their early daydreams. Three Lincoln Center is the hard fact that has made several of the center's most cherished daydreams come true. It deserves not to fail. —Brendan Gill

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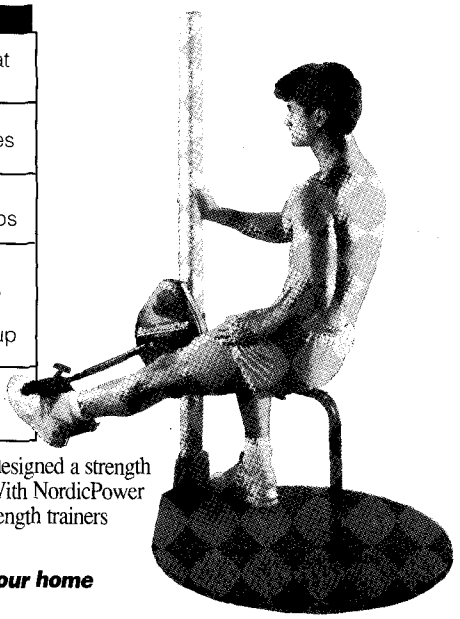

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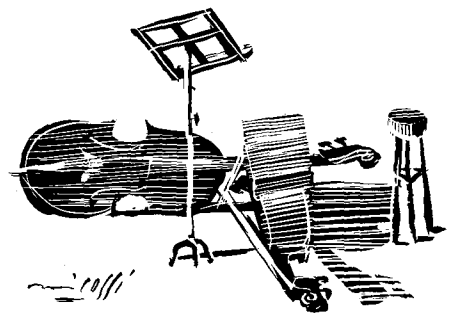
MUSICAL EVENTS

Let Not Medea in Public Slay Her Sons

Mascagni's "Cavalleria Rusticana" (1890) and Leoncavallo's "Pagliacci" (1892)—the first based on a Verga play that gave Duse one of her famous roles, the second, its composer said, based on a real-life tragedy that came to a court where his father was judge—are generally considered the type of verismo opera. At Covent Garden in 1959, Franco Zeffirelli staged a definitively "realistic" production, marvellously detailed, elaborately rehearsed. Real water ran from the village fountain; the liquid representing the "sincere wine" that Turiddu praises was tinted to the precise shade of real Francofonte wine; the fine new costumes had been hung out in the rain, bottles bulging their pockets, to turn them into clothes that looked as if real people had been wearing them. When Zeffirelli attended a revival a year or two later, he made a fuss because the ladies of the chorus had slipped into comfortable stays instead of pulling themselves into the authentically Sicilian shapes he had prescribed. In 1970, he mounted a version of the production at the Met; Irving Kolodin wrote that he had been "bold enough to derive his concepts of locale and local color from the well bloodied soil from which the two works sprang, clever enough to deny himself any meaningless 'improvements' on the action and reaction that have given these works their pulse of life for more than seventy-five years." In both theatres, the "Cav and Pag" lasted well.

Another production that remains vivid to me was not realistic at all. It was given in Parma in 1969, a year when Italians called upon the heavily subsidized art of opera to justify its existence, when it was front-page news if a season opened without student and worker demonstrations. Parma's demonstration was peaceful, sustained, and powerful: beside a tall, gaily decorated municipal Christmas tree in the piazza, sugar workers erected a small "tree of misery," whose bare, stunted boughs bore only stark, factual legends: names of strikers killed by the police, details of the average wage in Italy's provinces. In rain and snow, workers and students kept vigil beside it while we hurried by from the Royal Theatre to eat delicious, expensive meals in Parma's good restaurants. The production, by Lamberto Puggelli, was strictly Brechtian; Paolo Bregni's set used the *Gardine*, that white half curtain drawn back and forth midstage. "Pagliacci" was done first. After the intermezzo, a black cloth unfurled; at the touch of a switch it became a starlit velvet sky, and Act II started. For "Cavalleria" it became transparent, a dawn sky with stars still twinkling; it fell, and from the flies there descended a small cutout of a church façade, with a practicable portal. The show must have cost but a fraction of what a built and painted production with carts and carpets, fountains and horses and rich dresses would have cost. Everything was precise and distinguished. The dramas were well sung and well acted, and in the absence of picturesque paraphernalia the characters' suffering was directly projected.

The New York City Opera's new production of "Cavalleria" and "Pagliacci," which opened this month, has a New York setting—Little Italy a hundred years ago. The director, Jonathan Eaton, wrote in a program note, "To an audience today, watching a cast of rustics move through an old Italian village offers a style of imagery that seems far removed from the gritty realism the two composers were striving after." His version, however, proves more unrealistic, distanced, and convention-bound than do most "Cav and Pag" stagings. These New York streets are conveniently deserted, no passersby, when a serenade or an intimate duet must be sung, then suddenly thronged—people pour in from all sides—when it's time for a chorus. In "Cavalleria," the men and women assemble singing of the fragrant orange trees and the larks carolling in



the blossoming myrtle; since it is Easter Day, the women have left their "shuttles" and the men have ceased their "rustic labors." We can tell ourselves, of course, that the city dwellers are singing a song they brought with them from Sicily; we can work out that Alfio—here not a carter but an itinerant knife vender—sings a "traditional carter's song" while whipping his bike saddle instead of cracking a whip; we can pretend that Francofonte is a wine-producing village on Long Island. But we are dealing with a conceit, a fancy version, less direct than the performances set traditionally in Southern Italy or, like Parma's, on a frankly nonrepresentational stage.

The "Cavalleria" prelude, needless to say, was staged. The curtain rose on a Bowery bum with his bottle, slumped on some steps. As the light grew, we saw that he was in fact nattily dressed—leather leggings, a tight Norfolk jacket. And then he broke into Turiddu's serenade, "O Lola, with your milk-white chemise." Since there were tenements all around, in terms of "gritty realism" he would have awakened the neighborhood, but apparently only Lola heard him. She came out in her nightdress and they coupled in a doorway, reaching climax with almost comic rapidity, during the brief allegro section. During the andante, Turiddu popped into church for a quick pre-Easter Mass confession. That the prelude is built largely on Santuzza music seemed not to bother Mr. Eaton. Did he perhaps intend us to deduce that guilty thoughts about Santuzza were passing through Turiddu's mind? (In Zeffirelli's staged prelude, the serenade floated in from the distance, and at her theme a desperate Santuzza crossed the stage in pursuit of the singer.) "If a scene belongs offstage, don't push it on," said Horace. And hotting up operas of the past with X-rated action is a cheap, easy device. Verga's "Cavalleria" novella contained a graphic, blow-by-blow account of the fight between Alfio and Turiddu, but when the author dramatized the tale he put the fight offstage; Mascagni and his librettists followed suit. Mr. Eaton pushed it onstage and added embellishment of his own: four men held up the dying Turiddu while Alfio castrated him, and then they displayed him in bloody parody of the crucified Christ that had dominated the Easter procession. "The Easter mass celebrates

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the resurrection of the spirit, and a duel will exorcise transgressions of the flesh," the director explained in his note. The duel hardly helps poor Santuzza. Her music pours the while from the orchestra; the opera is her tragedy; but who even noticed her amid the writhing, the blood, and the blasphemy? The close of "Pagliacci" was similarly, but not so grievously, defused—rendered less powerful by a stagy new invention. Canio committed his murders on a carrousel and then threw a lever to set Nedda's and Silvio's corpses circling around him while he stood at the center. Mr. Eaton had not been bold, clever, or confident enough to trust and work with dramatic action that has stood a century's test. Another jejune excrescence was the prominent introduction, in "Cavalleria," of an old blind woman (she wore a label round her neck saying "Blind"), evidently a local prophetess. Her oracular intonation of the opera's closing line, "Hanno ammazzato compare Turiddu," very nearly raised a laugh.

I liked the thought Mr. Eaton had given to the community's thoughts about Lola. I found his attempt to present Turiddu as a gloomy, tormented neurotic, not (until his collapse at "Mamma, quel vino è generoso") a swaggering young buck, "interesting" but misguided and musically unsound. Much else was routine traditional—the chorus favored semicircular lineups (and even then kept falling behind the beat)—and some of the "blocking" looked clumsy or perverse as it required singers to alternate their attention between a character addressed and the conductor, and choose between singing into the wings and getting their voices out into the house. Paul Shortt's décor was undistinguished, undramatic; Jeff Davis's lighting was rather crude.

"And to whom do you wish to leave the bulk of your estate, sir?"

• •

CRITICAL opinion about "Cavalleria Rusticana" and "Pagliacci" is newly unsettled. Both operas were written in almost cynical bids for popular success: Mascagni's when his high-minded "Guglielmo Ratcliff," after Heine, found no takers; Leoncavallo's when his high-minded "Chatterton," after Vigny, failed to reach the stage and he turned to something that would rival "Cavalleria." Each composer achieved his only lasting hit, though both went on to write many ambitious operas. Back in 1894, Bernard Shaw reviewed a Covent Garden season that included "Carmen," the genitor of verismo, and four modern operas: Puccini's "Manon Lescaut," "Cavalleria," "Pagliacci," and "Falstaff." Puccini, Shaw said presciently, "looks to me more like the heir of Verdi than any of his rivals":

> In Cavalleria and Pagliacci I can find nothing but Donizettian opera rationalized, condensed, filled in, and thoroughly brought up to date; but in Manon Lescaut the domain of Italian opera is enlarged by an annexation of German territory. . . . There is genuine symphonic modification, development, and occasionally combination of the thematic material, all in a dramatic way, but also in a musically homogeneous way.

Of Leoncavallo's opera he wrote:

> The moment you hear Pagliacci, you feel that it is all up with L'Elisir. It is true that Leoncavallo has shewn as yet nothing comparable to the melodic inspiration of Donizetti; but the advance in serious workmanship, in elaboration of detail, in variety of interest, and in capital expenditure on the orchestra and the stage, is enormous.

And of Mascagni's:

> There is more work in the composition of Cavalleria than in La Favorita, Lucrezia, and Lucia put together, though I cannot think—perhaps this is only my own old-fashionedness—that any part of it will live as long or move the world as much as the best half-dozen numbers in those three obsolete masterpieces.

The early interpreters were not violent singers. Adelina Stehle, the first Nedda, was chosen by Verdi the following year to be his Nannetta. Gemma Bellincioni, the first Santuzza, had been considered for Desdemona. Victor Maurel, the first Tonio, had been Verdi's Iago and was soon to be his Falstaff. Their voices can still be heard on records, and so can those of Melba, who was the Met's first Nedda, of Emma Calvé, who was Covent Garden's first Santuzza, and of Fernando De Lucia, that prince of bel-canto tenors, who was Covent Garden's first Turiddu and the Met's first Canio. Melba, Calvé, and De Lucia were also among the 1894 "Cav and Pag" casts that Shaw heard. In the same season, Melba sang Lucia, Marguerite, Juliet, Elsa; and Emma Eames, the

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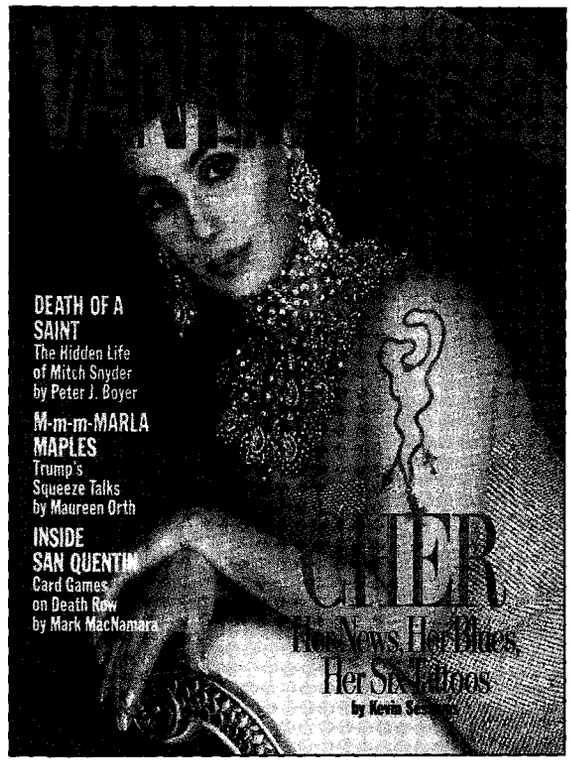

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Met's first Santuzza, sang Marguerite, Eva, Charlotte. It was not long, however, before a fiercer, less refined kind of singing than theirs, supported by noisy accompaniment, filled the roles. The operas fell in esteem—neither Mascagni nor Leoncavallo earns even a passing mention in Joseph Kerman's "Opera as Drama"—although their vigorous, straightforward emotionalism, which has never failed to stir audiences, kept them before the public, and great singers continued to give great performances. Among the more recent were Victoria de Los Angeles, Zinka Milanov, Jussi Björling, Jon Vickers, and (in the studio only, for although at the age of fifteen she made her début as Santuzza, she never sang the role again in public, or that of Nedda) Maria Callas. When any serious critical attention was turned on the pair, "Pag" tended to be rated somewhat above "Cav," as being somewhat more carefully composed and more carefully orchestrated. Instinct, on the other hand—uncritical emotional response—suggested that "Cav" has a higher charge of natural, instinctive melodic inspiration.

Donizetti's serious operas, which Shaw had called obsolete, returned to the living repertory in the sixties; we began to listen to and study old works in a new way; and "Cav" found new champions. In the 1987 Kobbé, Lord Harewood wrote:

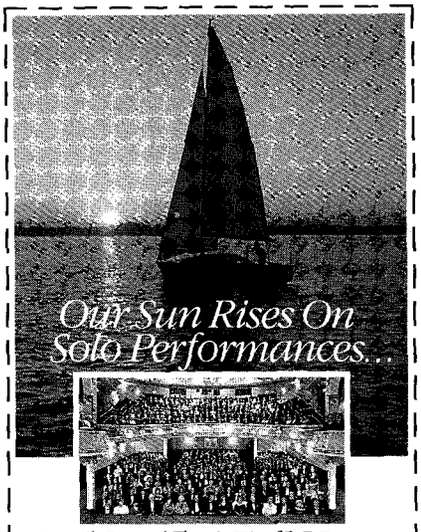
> "Cavalleria Rusticana" is both undervalued and misinterpreted. At least at this stage of his career . . . Mascagni wrote a lyrical and expressive vocal line and only occasionally in "Cavalleria" (notably in the duet for Alfio and Santuzza) is the score touched by the violence we have come in an oversimplified way to think of as *verismo*. . . . As to the opera's motivation, it seems to me not only tragic but steeped in the ritual of a primitive, believing people. . . . In comparison, "Pagliacci" . . . is highly effective—but as a lurid newspaper anecdote of a *crime passionel* rather than tragedy.

Mascagni, Harewood suggested, "wrote as an instinctive successor to Bellini," and he commended—as I commend—the composer's own scrupulous conducting of "Cavalleria," recorded in 1940 (and now available on CD). But I don't know: although the operas "work," I can't take either composer as seriously as I do Donizetti and Bellini, or love and admire their music as I do Donizetti at his best, and "Norma." Moreover, I always feel that in the genre scenes there is padding. Yet the musical case for both "Cavalleria" and "Pagliacci" is well put at the State Theatre. Richard Bradshaw, in his début with the company, leads performances passionate and energetic but also refined. His approach is at once instinctually fresh and wisely mature—enriched by a sound knowledge of the good performing traditions and a practical sense of what best to do for a particular singer at a particular moment, on the night. The orchestra played attentively, emotionally, often with beauty. Not all was right: the chorus, as I said, was apt to drag; organ and orchestra did not join harmoniously in the "Cavalleria" intermezzo.

Onstage, there were several able performers and two who were remarkable. Sharon Graham's singing of Santuzza was not easy: on the first night—tackling her first Santuzza—she pushed needlessly hard at times and then became unsteady. But there was intentness, color, musical emotion in her every utterance. She was a gripping actress not only in person, features, gait but, equally, in her musical delivery. In "Pagliacci," Sigmund Cowan sang a world-class Tonio, with a ringing, securely focussed baritone. He brought all aspects of the role to life; the little dialogue with Canio had Iago-like intensity. For the rest, Stephen O'Mara, the Turiddu, was morose (no doubt on Mr. Eaton's instructions), and thick rather than brightly forward and freely ringing in tone; John Absalom, the Canio, was honest and moving, though he seemed to be trying for a vocally bigger performance than he could rightly manage; Gwynne Geyer, in her City Opera début, was an efficient but monochrome Nedda, insufficiently pretty of sound. The other principals, all with merits, were Donnie Ray Albert (Alfio), Susan Shafer (Mamma Lucia), Melanie Sonnenberg (Lola), Robin Buck (Silvio), and Kevin Anderson (Beppe).

Although one could not applaud the staging, this double bill, like the "Traviata" a week before, was something to consider seriously. Christopher Keene is bringing new life to the City Opera—not just with last season's "Moses und Aron" and the forthcoming "Die Soldaten" but also in the presentation of the standard repertory. One may admire this or that feature, or deplore it; one does not remain uncaring.

—Andrew Porter



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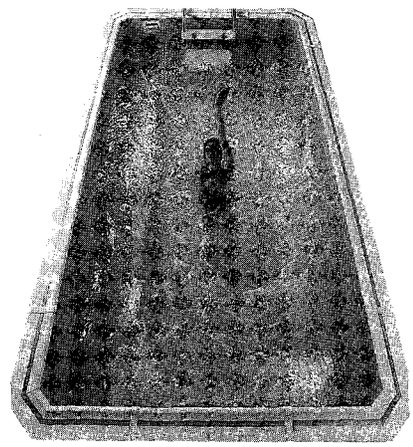

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LETTER FROM NEW DELHI

Monday, May 20th, was the day of the general election here. Two additional election days, the twenty-third and the twenty-sixth, were scheduled in other parts of the country; in India, polling is such a cumbersome process that it is often spread over a week or more. This was India's tenth general election, and it bore close watching, for in recent months the country had been going through much political, economic, and religious turmoil. That Monday, I had lunch with a friend who lives in an affluent area of Delhi. Afterward, she set off in her car to vote, and I went along.

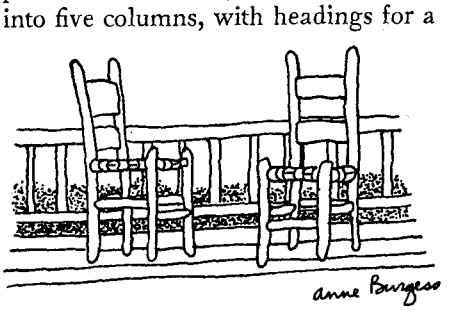
We pulled up in front of a college building that was being used as a polling station. Outside, in the hot sun, half a dozen political workers were lounging at two tables set up near the entrance. Behind one table, two posters with the red-white-and-green symbol of the Congress (I) Party (the "I" stands for "Indira Gandhi") were mounted high on the façade. One poster attacked the present government—a caretaker government, led by Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar, which had been in power since last November—by showing a shattered clay piggy bank spilling out coins, with the caption "What sort of government came, broke the banks, and brought a price rise?" followed by the exhortation "Bring back Congress (I)." The other poster reproduced a picture of Rajesh Khanna, the local Congress (I) candidate for Parliament, and carried the Party slogan, "For Stability and Progress." Hung from a bamboo pole beneath the posters was the Congress Party flag, bearing the Party symbol—a hand held up in greeting.

High on the façade behind the other table was an orange-red poster for the conservative, Hindu-revivalist Bharatiya Janata Party, showing a lotus, an ancient Hindu symbol; on one side of the stem was the name of the Party's candidate for Parliament, L. K. Advani. "Vote B.J.P." was at the top. A flag hung beneath this poster, too—the Party's orange-and-green flag, also bearing a lotus. The table was laden with brochures giving the highlights of the Party program in the form of slogans, in English: "Towards Rama Rajya" (the "rule of Rama," which Hindus regard as the Golden Age), "Clean Political System," "Economic Growth with Social Justice," "Vibrant Social Order," and "World Fraternity." The B.J.P. was emerging as the main opposition of the Congress Party, which, in different guises, had ruled the country for forty of the forty-four years since Independence.

I asked my friend why political parties were allowed to campaign at the polling station, and she said, "They are supposedly here to make sure that there is no hanky-panky. But, of course, in a lot of places they themselves are responsible for all kinds of booth-capturing." The term "booth-capturing" covers a multitude of electoral violations, from terrorizing would-be voters to stuffing ballot boxes.

Inside the polling station were more tables, these manned by election officials and clerks. There was hardly anyone waiting to vote. My friend presented a voter-registration slip to the official who had the register of voters, and he handed her a ballot. With a toothpick that had been dipped in indelible ink, the official put a mark on the nail of my friend's forefinger—something that is routinely done to prevent people from voting twice.

My friend and I walked over to the ballot box, a steel box the size of a small trunk, with a government seal and a foot-long slot, set on a table at the back of the room. Around the table was a makeshift cardboard partition that barely screened my friend from the people in the room. "At the last election, they had a proper screen," she told me. Then she unfolded the ballot paper. It was nearly a yard long and two feet wide, and was printed in four panels, containing, all told, the names of seventy candidates for the New Delhi Parliamentary constituency. (In other parts of the country, elections for state assemblies were also being held, but New Delhi is not a part of a state—it is governed by a corporation.) Each panel of the ballot paper was divided into five columns, with headings for a candidate's name, address, party affiliation, symbol, and symbol number. The information was printed in Hindi, Urdu, and English—the languages spoken in Delhi. The symbols were also needed because sixty-four per cent of the Indian electorate is illiterate, and depends on them to recognize the candidates.



In the country at large, thirty-eight parties were fielding candidates for five hundred and eleven out of five hundred and forty-five seats in the Lok Sabha, the lower house of Parliament. (Elections in some states had to be postponed, because of violence on the part of religious extremists.) Many of the party symbols were familiar from posters and flags around the city: a dress for the Samdarshi Party, an elephant for the Bahujan Samaj Party, a hoe for the Poorvanchal Rashtriya Congress, a boy pouring water for the Doordarshi, a radio for the Bhartiya Loktantrik Mazdoor Dal, a man driving oxen for the Lok Dal, a bicycle for the J&K Panthers Party, a wheel for the Janata Dal, an apple for the Desh Bhakt Party, a torch for the Jan Parishad, and, of course, the hand for the Congress Party and the lotus for the B.J.P. In addition to sixteen candidates endorsed by the parties on my friend's ballot, there were fifty-four independent candidates, each listed with his own distinct symbol. These candidates, like the parties, seemed to have taken their symbols mostly from everyday life: a trumpet, a conch shell, an airplane, an anchor, a jeep, a telephone, an easel, a drum, a light bulb, a table fan, a ceiling fan, a fire engine, a handcart, a train, a teacup.

I asked whether the ballot couldn't have been made simpler.

"You'll be surprised to know that in some parts of the South the ballot paper is twice as big—with twice as many candidates—as in New Delhi," my friend said.

"How can voters find their way around in this chaos?" I asked. "It's hard to see how illiterate voters could manage to pick out the symbols—the candidates—of their choice."

"No one cares," she said. "In this blessed country, anyone can stand as an independent candidate merely by paying a security deposit of five hundred rupees and getting a symbol approved by the Election Commission."

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The Election Commission is a body appointed by the government but independent of it, which is charged with supervising the election. Five hundred rupees is about twenty dollars, at the current rate of exchange. "Apparently, in this election there are almost nine thousand candidates standing for the Lok Sabha, and almost seventeen thousand for the state assemblies. The only way to reduce the number of candidates would be to raise the security deposit."

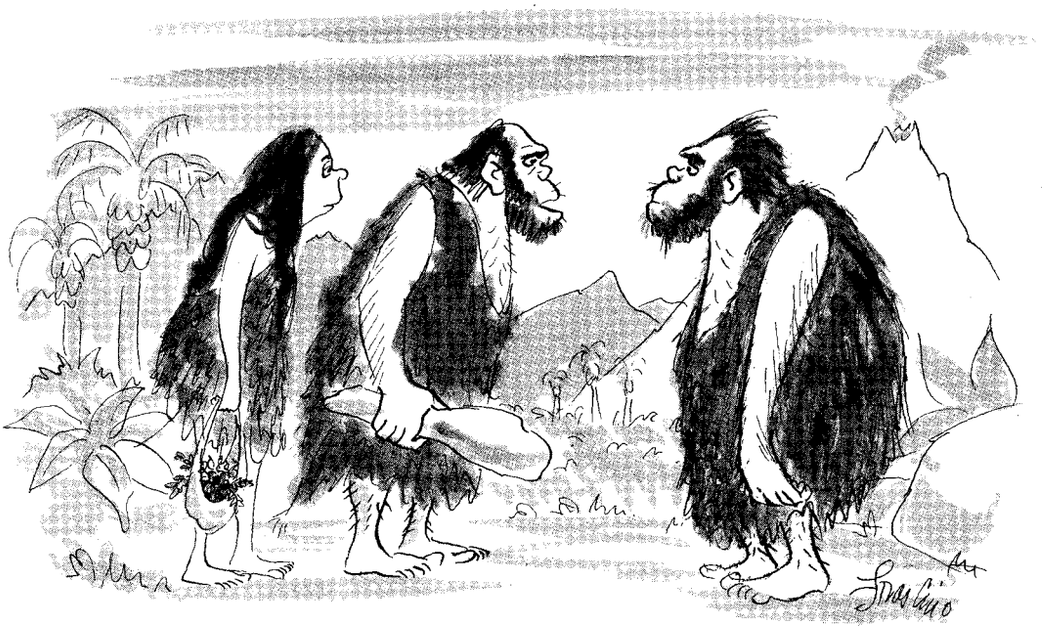
"Why hasn't that been done?"

"Recently, there was a proposal to raise it to fifty thousand rupees, but the politicians derailed it—God knows why. All over the country, people are taking longer and longer to cast their vote."

"But there is hardly anybody waiting to vote here," I said.

"Half the people are so disgusted with all the governments that they are staying away," my friend said.

She took a stamp—a little wooden affair with a rubber cross on it—from the table, inked it on a pad, and put the mark on the lotus. She carefully refolded the ballot paper along the creases but still had to struggle to push it through the slot in the ballot box.



"I hunt and she gathers—otherwise, we couldn't make ends meet."

• •

MAY and June are generally the hottest months in New Delhi. The city bakes in kiln-like heat until relief comes with the monsoon rains of July and August. This year, however, on the evening of the twenty-first of May—the day following the first election day—the city was battered for more than an hour by strong winds and hailstones the size of golf balls. Roads became waterlogged, trees were uprooted, and overhead power cables snapped. A boy was electrocuted by a fallen cable. A man was struck dead by a bolt of lightning. At least a dozen other people were injured. My bearer in the hotel told me he had said an extra prayer, for he was sure that the unseasonable storm was a bad omen.

Later that evening, around eleven o'clock, the bearer woke me up with the news that Rajiv Gandhi had been killed in a bomb blast. "I hope it's not a Sikh, or the city will be drowned in the blood of the Sikhs," the bearer said. I was stunned by the news, and I told him that I shared his apprehensions.

In 1984, when Rajiv's mother, Indira Gandhi, who was then Prime Minister, was assassinated by two of her Sikh bodyguards, Congress Party politicians in New Delhi incited Hindu mobs to retaliate against the Sikhs, and within a few days of Mrs. Gandhi's death at least three thousand innocent Sikhs in the city had been killed.

I told the bearer that I wondered if assassinations and violence would make Indians lose faith in democracy.

"Why, Sahib? The Mogul courts were full of intrigues and murders," he said. "Royal brothers cut each other's throats, sons killed their fathers—that's the way our governments have always worked."

When he left the room, to give the news to other guests, I turned on the radio, and caught the eleven-thirty news broadcast from All-India Radio, which confirmed the word of Rajiv's assassination. He had been killed during a campaign stop in Sriperumbudur, near Madras. A woman with explosives strapped to her waist had approached him to touch his feet in a gesture of obeisance and set off the explosives. She and thirteen bystanders had also died. The station went off the air for the night promptly after the news broadcast, as usual—without so much as a recapitulation of Rajiv's life. I switched on the television, but it, too, was just going off the air for the night. (There is only one national television channel in India, and it, like All-India Radio, is run by the government.) The shutdown of radio and television at such a moment was eerie. In the subsequent days, it became clear that the broadcast authorities had been afraid that in the middle of the elections any discussion of Rajiv's life and death—despite the fact that he was at the time of his death the president of the Congress Party and had served the country from 1984 to 1989 as its Prime Minister—might be construed as political propaganda for the Congress Party. In any case, perhaps because Rajiv was the young, handsome scion of the best-known Indian family in the world, and perhaps because he was interested in Western technology and ideas, his assassination was given a great deal of coverage in the Western press. By comparison, reactions here seemed very restrained.

BETWEEN 1980 and 1983, Indira Gandhi encouraged a movement of Sikh extremists in order to counterbalance Sikh moderates and their party, the Akali Dal, which had come to power in Punjab in 1977, after defeating the Congress Party. Chosen Prime Minister in 1966, she had assumed emergency dictatorial powers between

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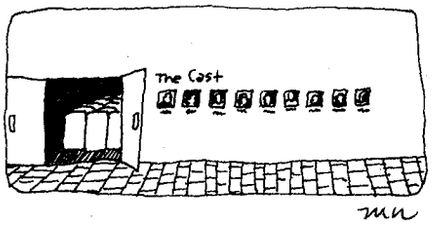
1975 and 1977, and, as a consequence, had been in a political wilderness between 1977 and 1980. Now that she was back in office, she hoped that the Sikhs' house, divided against itself, would fall and the Congress Party return to power in the state. But the Sikh extremists got out of control. They took sanctuary in the building complex of the Golden Temple, the Sikhs' holiest shrine, in Amritsar, turned it into an armed fortress, and sought to dictate the terms for Punjab autonomy. In June of 1984, Mrs. Gandhi tried to smash the movement by sending troops into the Golden Temple. About a thousand Sikh "martyrs" were killed, and the sacred buildings of the shrine were heavily damaged. It was as a direct result of that action that Mrs. Gandhi was assassinated four months later.

The whole Gandhi family had been on the "hit list" of the Sikh extremists since the attack on the Golden Temple, and after the retaliatory violence against the Sikhs in New Delhi following Mrs. Gandhi's death Rajiv became an especially hunted quarry. The Congress Party chose him as Prime Minister within hours of his mother's death, and the Sikh extremists blamed him for not stopping the violence immediately and then for not bringing the Congress culprits to book; no action was ever taken against them. In consequence, the cordon of security around him—both while he was Prime Minister and after the Party's defeat, in the election of 1989—was unprecedented. Lately, however—particularly during the election campaign—the security had been relaxed, either because he and his advisers thought that he shouldn't appear remote from the electorate or because they thought that with the passing of time the Sikh threat had diminished. In any case, in the last few weeks he had started mingling freely with the crowds.

The day after Rajiv's assassination, the city was abuzz with rumors about who was responsible for his death. Sikh terrorists and other extremist groups were mentioned, of course. One rumor had it that the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party was responsible. ("He was the only person who stood between the Party and its dream of creating a Hindu society" is how the argument went.) Another rumor had it that "the foreign hand" was involved. ("The C.I.A. has struck again to destabilize our country and keep us weak," the nationalists contended, as usual.)

Among the journalists I met on my rounds, there was a considerable flap about reports that friends of India and of the Gandhi family, like Kenneth D. Kaunda, Julius K. Nyerere, Daniel Ortega, Willy Brandt, and Brian Mulroney, were not coming to New Delhi for the cremation. It had been learned that various high officials in Britain were also not coming (since, after all, Rajiv was not the head of the government), so there was great relief at the news that Prince Charles would come, in a special R.A.F. plane; Rajiv had attended the Prince's wedding, and they had had personal ties. And then it turned out that Douglas Hurd, Britain's Foreign Secretary, would come, too; he was hitching a ride with Prince Charles.

Within a couple of days, it became clear that Rajiv's assassination had been carried out by members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, popularly known as the Tamil Tigers—a secessionist Tamil group in Sri Lanka. The group had been fighting a guerrilla war in northern and eastern Sri Lanka for years. In Sri Lanka, Tamils, who are Hindus and are in the minority, have long felt that the Sinhalese, who are Buddhists and are in the majority, treat them as second-class citizens, and they have felt so even more keenly since the fifties, when Sinhalese was made the official language. The history of the Indian government's relations with the Tamil Tigers in Mrs. Gandhi's time was, in a sense, similar to the history of its relations with the Sikh extremists. Although Mrs. Gandhi had outwardly maintained good relations with Sri Lanka, she had followed a policy of secretly arming the Tamil Tigers in their struggle. Her motives are a matter of speculation. Perhaps she was trying to keep Sri Lanka unstable, and dependent on India. Perhaps she wanted to help protect the three million Tamils of Sri Lanka in order to win favor with fifty million Tamils living in South India, mostly in the state of Tamil Nadu. (The village where Rajiv Gandhi was killed is in Tamil Nadu.) Or perhaps she was disturbed by the flow of Tamils from Sri Lanka. It is estimated that there are a hundred and fifteen thousand Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka living in camps in Tamil Nadu, and that perhaps as many Sri Lankan Tamils are living elewhere in the state, many illegally, and are engaged in small businesses, like hawking wares on the street. All these Sri Lankan Tamils have served as a constant reminder to Indian Tamils of the struggle of their brothers and sisters on the neighboring island. Whatever her motives, her policy backfired. By the time Rajiv came to power, the Tamils in Sri Lanka were so strong that they actually threatened to dismember the country. Rajiv feared that other powers would therefore come to the aid of the Sri Lankan government, and so upstage India. And if the Tamil rebellion succeeded in Sri Lanka it might incite rebellion among Tamils within India. India itself was already facing a threat of dismemberment from the Sikhs in Punjab, and a strong secessionist movement was also afoot among the Assamese, in northeast India. A rebellion by the Tamils might split north from south and culminate in the unravelling of the union.



In 1987, Rajiv made an agreement with the Sri Lankan government to provide Indian troops to crush the Tamil rebellion within its borders, and at one point in the following year there were as many as seventy thousand Indian troops in Sri Lanka. Rajiv thereby earned the enmity not only of the Tamils but also of the Sinhalese, for they came to regard the Indian troops as an occupying force. In fact, when Rajiv was in Colombo to sign the agreement, a Sinhalese soldier in the Guard of Honor was seized in the act of hitting him with the butt of his rifle. Many Indians feared that Sri Lanka was in danger of becoming India's Vietnam: Indian troops were having little success against the Tamil guerrillas; the Sri Lankan government was losing popularity at home and was coming under attack by a Sinhalese Maoist group. In 1988, the Sri Lankan government asked Rajiv to withdraw his troops, and he had little choice but to acquiesce. His policy toward the Tamils, like his mother's policy toward the Sikhs, had backfired. Both

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Indira Gandhi and Rajiv had made the mistake of confusing short-term political considerations—she in Punjab and he in South India—with the long-term interests of the country. The Tamil Tigers blamed Rajiv for undermining their near-revolution in Sri Lanka. They also claimed that as a consequence of his intervention their cause had suffered an international eclipse.

ON the twenty-second of May, the Congress (I) Working Committee, meeting in New Delhi under the chairmanship of P. V. Narasimha Rao, unanimously elected Sonia Gandhi, the widow of Rajiv, to succeed her husband as the Party president, and as it did so Congress workers gathered outside her residence and chanted slogans like "Save the country—bring in Sonia Gandhi!" When the Party spokesman, Pranab Mukherjee, was asked if Sonia had been consulted, he said, "There is no question of her refusing. She is a Party member, and the decision will be communicated to her in due course." The reason given by political observers for her selection was that the Congress Party wanted to make the most of the "sympathy factor." The choice was nevertheless remarkable, on several counts: though Sonia Gandhi had become a naturalized Indian in 1983, some fifteen years after her marriage to Rajiv (the two had met in England while they were students there), she was born and brought up in Italy and is a Roman Catholic; she had never evinced any interest in politics; and there is no tradition here of drafting a reluctant politician, not to mention a grieving widow. Many of the people on the Working Committee who supported her selection were close family friends, and so should presumably have known better than to put her in such an awkward position.

Sonia firmly turned down the offer, not once but twice, and eventually Rao was elected. He is a respected and seasoned leader, but he is seventy years old and has had multiple-bypass heart surgery. The Gandhi coterie is now busy projecting Rajiv's nineteen-year-old daughter, Priyanka, as a future leader of the Congress Party. Rajiv's one other child, a twenty-year-old son, Rahul, is a student at Harvard and, it is said, shows no interest in politics.

May 24th was the day of the cortège and the cremation, which took place in New Delhi, on the banks of the Yamuna River. People here will long remember Rajiv's funeral: the heat, the crowds, and, above all, the heavy stillness in the air.

A friend of mine remembers one moment that provided a relief from the otherwise extremely solemn occasion. As a high-ranking Indian official sat in a V.I.P. area holding a newspaper over his head to shield himself from the sun, he was approached by a Japanese diplomat and asked if he would mind sharing his newspaper with the wife of a high-ranking Japanese diplomat, who was sitting nearby. The official handed over part of the newspaper, and soon he and the woman, holding newspapers over their heads in the middle of a throng of notables and dignitaries, looked like two farmers at a village meeting.

There is something elemental about the Hindu last rites; in the West, by comparison, death is handled so discreetly. On that oppressive day in May, the cremation's primitiveness and finality were riveting: the exposed body on the funeral pyre; the wood being arranged and rearranged on top of the body; Rahul, the son and heir, lighting the pyre with a taper; and then the burst of flames.

"SO vast is the Indian electoral exercise, arguably the biggest voluntary mobilisation in the world of men, women and materials for a single objective, that there is a sense of marvel that it culminates with so little disruption of life and with limited violence," a local newspaper called the *Business & Political Observer* noted recently. Of course, everyone agrees that the Indian general election is an enormous achievement. Among other things, hundreds of millions of ballot papers must be individually unfolded, examined, and counted by hand. (For security reasons, the officials who count the ballots sit in locked cages, under the eye of suspicious functionaries of various parties.) But elections in India have always been marred by all kinds of intimidation and violence. Even before the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, this year's general election was turning out to be the most violent one ever. In New Delhi, terrorist gangs driving in stolen cars tried to assassinate Sajjan Kumar and Jagdish Tytler, two Congress Party Parliamentary candidates

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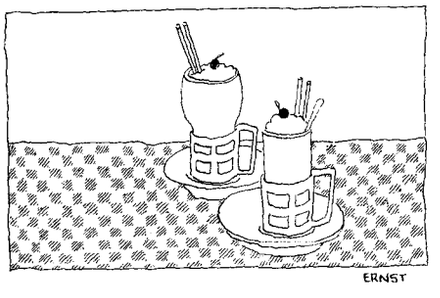
from New Delhi and well-known friends of the Gandhi family. The Sikhs believe that Tytler was one of the people who masterminded the riots after Mrs. Gandhi's death. Both of them escaped unharmed, but several of their bodyguards were killed. (Although New Delhi has an elaborate system of red alerts and other security drills—indeed, there are so many police here now that one has the feeling of being in an armed camp—the assassins got away without anyone's giving chase, firing at them, or stopping them at any of the capital's innumerable roadblocks.) In Meerut, in Uttar Pradesh, nineteen people were killed as a result of Hindu-Muslim riots. To restore calm, the authorities imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew there, as they did in many other riot-torn towns. In Jehanabad, in Bihar, just after the polling began, a gang of armed men, said to be Congress Party supporters, surrounded the polling station and threw stones at the assembled voters and fired shots into the air. The gang then stormed the polling station, snatched the ballot papers from the presiding election officer, and stamped the symbol of the hand on them. Nearly a hundred booths were similarly captured in and around Jehanabad. In another town in Bihar, three hundred incidents of booth-capturing were reported, and there were stories of such incidents of electoral violence scattered across the country. The Election Commission was monitoring the violence and ordering repolling as best it could in these constituencies.

Because of the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, the two election days remaining were postponed to June 12th and June 15th except in Punjab, where the election has been postponed to September. The election campaign there has already claimed the lives of twenty-three candidates and hundreds of voters; in fact, Congress candidates did not stand in the state, for fear of being murdered. In the country as a whole, the tally of people killed as a result of polling was over eight hundred by the fifteenth of June. The figure exceeds by far that for any previous election, yet this election had a lower turnout than any election since 1957—only fifty-three per cent of the eligible voters.

The recent electoral exercise was not without its positive aspects. Elections in India are generally considered to be an accurate gauge of the people's will, and this election, despite all the chaos at the polls, was no exception. In almost every state, two dominant parties emerged for the first time. Also, in the past one of the weaknesses of Indian politics was people defecting from parties—changing party affiliations, horse-trading, breaking away from parties to form new ones—in order to win positions of power. Chandra Shekhar's government was made up largely of defectors from the Janata Dal Socialists, a party led by V. P. Singh—Singh himself was a defector from the Congress Party—and in this election many of those defectors went down to defeat, among them Devi Lal, the Deputy Prime Minister; Maneka Gandhi, the widow of Rajiv's brother, Sanjay, who was killed in an airplane crash in 1980; and a host of other government ministers.

Some of the election results were predictable, like the preponderance of Communists elected in West Bengal, where the pro-Soviet Communist Party has been in power since 1977, and the victory of the Janata Dal Socialists and V. P. Singh in Bihar, which is the poorest state. But many results were surprising. For instance, the Congress Party was put to rout by the B.J.P. in Uttar Pradesh—the home of the Nehrus and the Congress Party, and the birthplace of all leading Indian Prime Ministers so far. But it did so well in the South (partly as a consequence of the sympathy factor) that it chalked up a total of two hundred and twenty-two seats in the Lok Sabha, leaving it and its post-electoral allies some thirty seats short of a majority. It has now formed a minority government, with P. V. Narasimha Rao as the Prime Minister. (Arjun Singh, the boss of Madhya Pradesh, has replaced him as the president of the Party.) Rao is a veteran of the governments of Mrs. Gandhi and Rajiv—he served in the Cabinets of both, holding important portfolios, like that of External Affairs—and his selection is seen as an attempt by the Gandhi coterie to keep the old Congress order in place. Sharad Pawar, Rao's bitter rival in the Congress Party, has been named to the important position of Minister of Defense, as part of his price for allowing Rao to become Prime Minister. Independents and small parties may gravitate to the party in power, and perhaps even form a coalition government with it—no bad thing, given the diversity of India's peoples. In any case, no party wants a new general election in a hurry. But at the moment, the Congress government looks quite weak, and the B.J.P. is waiting in the wings.



The B.J.P. won only two seats in Parliament in 1984, but in 1989 it won eighty-six. That was a big jump, and in this election it won a hundred and eighteen seats. The Party, which grew out of the right-wing Hindu-chauvinist movements that got going at the time of the Partition and Independence, was so stridently pro-Hindu when it was established, in the early eighties, that it didn't even pay lip service to the principle of secularism. Over the past five or six years, the B.J.P. has grown so rapidly that it is now second in importance only to the Congress Party. Moreover, it did well not only in the Hindi-speaking North, which is the home of most Hindu-extremist movements, but also in other parts of the country—a result suggesting that it now has a national constituency. Indeed, many observers here maintain that the B.J.P. might well have beaten the Congress Party if it hadn't been for Rajiv's death in the middle of the election, and the sympathy factor: in the first round, in which votes had been cast for forty per cent of the seats, Congress did much worse than in the second and third rounds, when it pulled ahead. In fact, some observers are predicting that in the next election the B.J.P. will win and will form a majority government. It may be that, with its new position of power, the B.J.P. will turn into a responsible party. During the election, some B.J.P. leaders moderated their speeches enough so that they sounded like nationalists rather than like Hindu chauvinists. (Others kept up what sounded like a Fascist clamor: Bal Thackeray, a leader of Shiv Sena, a Hindu paramilitary extremist group allied with the B.J.P., chilled many Hindus and Muslims by blaming Mahatma Gandhi for the Partition of India and honoring Gandhi's assassin,

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Nathuram Godse.) But at present the Party remains linked with Hindu propaganda.

INDIANS are very sensitive to what is said about them in the Western press, and especially the British press. People in government and university circles here have been quite exercised lately over articles and editorials in British publications suggesting that the British influence in India has only recently ended and that the country is reverting to a divisive, or even anarchic, period. These articles, which amount to obituaries of "Raj India," argue that the Raj did not end with Independence, in 1947, but continued right up to the defeat of Rajiv Gandhi's government in 1989, with Indian leaders and officials having merely taken over the Empire's trappings of power. They say that the underpinnings of the Indian government after Independence remained, for the most part, those of the British Raj: a professional civil service, an independent judiciary, and a professional Army, all animated, one way or another, by British ideals. The almost successive electoral victories of the Congress Party led by Jawaharlal Nehru, his daughter, Indira Gandhi, and Indira's son Rajiv, under the banners of secularism and socialism, were little more than plebiscites on their rule. The "Nehru Dynasty" ruled the country for a total of thirty-eight years, enjoying powers akin to those of the viceroys.

The articles say that under the "Dynasty" the administrative apparatus of the British Raj was not only maintained but made to serve the family's economic policy. Nehru misguidedly attempted to graft a Soviet-style system of economic planning onto the existing Indian economy—an attempt that resulted in the crushing political, administrative, and economic centralization of a country with a great diversity of peoples. Mrs. Gandhi carried her father's centralization even further and dealt the coup de grâce to the independence of both the civil service and the judiciary by thoroughly politicizing them. An editorial in the London *Financial Times* notes that "the Raj is now nearing collapse," and argues that India's overcentralized government has created its own antithesis, in the form of "regional separatism, Hindu revivalism, political fragmentation and economic disarray." The editorial also notes that the last three Prime Ministers tried, in their different ways, to change things around, but in vain: Rajiv Gandhi, during his time in office, took tentative steps toward economic liberalization, but he couldn't free himself from his Nehru inheritance; his successor, V. P. Singh, seemed to try to better the lot of the "poor and backward castes," but his projected program of job reservation irrespective of individual merit could, and did, lead only to disorder and strife; and Singh's successor, Chandra Shekhar, talked as if he were committed to political decentralization, but he couldn't free himself from Nehru's socialism any more easily than Rajiv could. All three remained the children of the Congress Party, the editorial goes on to say; they tinkered with the system but didn't seriously try to reform it. Nor can the B.J.P. offer a solution. (After all, the country's population of eight hundred and eighty-four million, though predominantly Hindu, includes a hundred million Muslims and millions of Sikhs and Christians.) The *Financial Times* then offers its own remedy: "To remain democratic, a country as vast as India must become a loose federation. . . . Economic liberalism is itself a form of decentralisation. But it is also one that would allow the combination of economic integration with local political autonomy."

Of all the articles, perhaps the most widely read and discussed here was a comprehensive and searching treatment of India's economic problems which appeared in *The Economist* in early May. It argues that the Indian economy since Independence has been shackled by an extraordinary combination of extreme protectionism and domestic regulation, the reason being that the Indian government has pursued a policy of economic self-sufficiency, and so has chosen to have many capital goods, like heavy machinery, and nearly all consumer goods produced within the country, even if those goods are of lower quality than their competitors in the world market. "The economy is virtually closed to international trade," the article says, and it points out that India charges extremely high tariffs on all foreign goods. Furthermore, before imports even get to the tariff barrier they are faced with a complex and seemingly irrational system of classification and licensing. (A similar system applies to domestic products.) The main—

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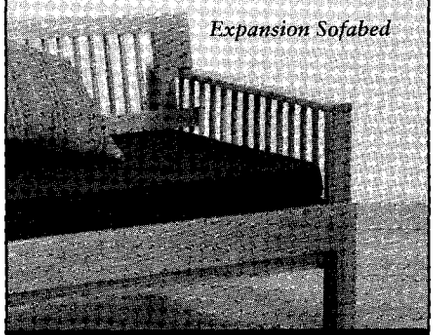

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unstated—purpose of the licensing system is to support a kind of distributive politics that allows politicians at the center and in the states to provide for their supporters by insuring that there are always plenty of bribes to go around. As a consequence of protectionism and licensing, India has imported almost no consumer goods. The effect of such a policy, the article contends, has been to hamper growth and prevent the country from achieving its full economic potential: "With a population four times as large as America's, its national product is roughly the same as Holland's. It is as absurd for India to pursue self-sufficiency as it would be for Spain or Switzerland. The world can get along fine without India, but India cannot prosper without the world." *The Economist* observes that the results for the economy are disastrous: "The inefficiencies caused by protection and badly run state enterprises are doubled and redoubled by the domestic regulatory system. This has no equal in the world. In many ways it puts Soviet central planning to shame."

Yet, the article notes, India's success in controlling imports has not meant a corresponding increase in exports of manufactured goods. Between 1980 and 1985, the average annual growth rate for the volume of these exports was only a tenth of one per cent. The slight liberalization of India's economy under Rajiv Gandhi, which began in 1985, had a startling effect on exports: the rate of growth between 1985 and 1988 jumped to 12.8 per cent. Nevertheless, India still lagged behind many other countries; South Korea, for example, had a growth rate of 23.9 per cent over the same period.

The article goes on to say that while the Indian government has chosen to act in the industrial sector, where its actions have proved self-defeating, it has ignored the real difference it can make in the agricultural sector and, by extension, in alleviating rural poverty. The government's protectionist policy has actually harmed rural areas, where most of the Indian poor live: by raising the domestic price of manufactured goods relative to that of agricultural goods, protectionism has reduced the real income of the rural sector. And capital investment in agriculture has declined; real investment in irrigation in India's largest states, for example, fell by eight per cent during the nineteen-eighties.

The Economist concludes that the only way for India to move forward economically is to abandon the cherished socialist policies and socialist nostrums of the Nehru Dynasty: "The government must dismantle an unbelievably complicated system of restraints and rewards that, over the past four decades, has securely enclosed every aspect of Indian life. The first and necessary step is to see these restraints and rewards as the cage that they are." The article notes that Indians living abroad are enterprising and successful in every area of life, and suggests that Indians at home would be equally successful if they were given half a chance. But the changes in India would have to be "not far short of a revolution" for that to happen. "The main prescription for policy is easy enough: India must be opened up to the rest of the world; the state must withdraw from micro-managing the economy and concentrate instead on building the social and physical infrastructure that the country lacks. . . . Left to arrange their own economic future, India's remarkable people would undoubtedly thrive. They have nothing to fear from competition or from the uncertainties of an unplanned world."

Influential people here, for the most part, say that many of the points made by *The Economist* are well taken. There seems to be general agreement with the journal's criticism of India's agricultural policy; at the same time, these people take exception to the basis of the analysis. Nehru's apologists say that the intent of his socialist policies was honorable—to prevent the exploitation of the poor by the rich and to try to insure equitable distribution of such goods and services as were available in a poor country—and that, anyway, socialism, in one form or another, was the prevailing philosophy of many European governments at the time, and it is only with hindsight, after the collapse of Communism in the Soviet Union, that opinion everywhere has shifted toward a market economy as opposed to a controlled economy.

A more important reservation that is heard here about the article is that it

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failed to take into account the fact that the underdeveloped countries it holds up to India as examples, such as South Korea, Taiwan, and Malaysia, are much smaller than India, and, moreover, all have highly authoritarian forms of government. It is also argued that if the Indian government had gone over to a market economy many of the poor would be worse off than they were to start with. And many people here say that even if the long-term prescriptions of *The Economist* are right they cannot be adopted, because the whole democratic political apparatus is oiled by short-term considerations: the exchange of money at every stage of granting licenses fills the coffers of the parties and makes campaigns and elections possible. Certainly it is hard to see how the elections could be financed without this system.

IT has been said that the Muslim revolution in Iran that toppled the Shah and ushered in the rule of the mullahs was brought about by the availability of cheap cassettes and cheap cassette players, because that made it possible for Ayatollah Khomeini, the religious leader and the Shah's hated enemy, to record and secretly circulate even to the most distant corners of Iran revolutionary messages inciting people to rise against their ruler "in the name of Allah and social justice." Some observers here see a similar revolution in the making in India, and unquestionably a wave of Hindu revivalism has grown stronger since 1987, when the Ramayana ("Romance of Rama"), the most popular Hindu epic in Southeast Asia, was serialized on national television. The effect of such a revolution could be to topple the secular socialist state as it has existed since Independence, and usher in the rule of Hindu zealots.

In the last ten years or so, television in India has grown so much in importance that it now serves as a complement to India's cinema industry, which produces more films than that of any other country in the world. (Some of the leading politicians in India have been movie stars who came to office after playing heroes and gods in films.) The national television channel, Doordarshan, or Distant Holy Audience, is a powerful instrument; in many parts of the country, it is the only source of information for illiterate people. It is used mostly as a vehicle for government propaganda (it shows a lot of shots of the Prime Minister of the day) and for serving up noncontroversial, uplifting fare. The serialized Ramayana was the most widely seen television program in Indian history. Many who watched it were first-time television viewers, and became hooked on it.

The Ramayana is as close as the Hindus come to having a sacred book. It was composed by Valmiki around 300 B.C. and runs to some twenty-four thousand Sanskrit couplets. Today, most people know the epic in a popular Hindi translation done by Tulsidas in the sixteenth century. Every year, episodes from the Ramayana are enacted all across the country at religious festivals, and every child in India is familiar with the basic outline of the story, which tells of the trials and the exemplary lives of the god-prince Rama and his wife, Sita. Rama, who is regarded as an avatar of the Hindu god Vishnu, is the eldest son of Dasaratha, a king in ancient India. The king has three wives and many children. During a battle, he is gravely wounded, and one of his wives, Kaikeyi, saves his life. In gratitude, the king asks her to make two wishes, but she demurs. Later, when Rama, the rightful heir, is about to succeed his father, Kaikeyi makes her two wishes: the king must banish Rama from the kingdom for fourteen years and make her son, Bharata, king instead. Rama and Sita go into exile in the forest, and the old king dies of a broken heart. But Bharata refuses the throne, and sets off in search of Rama. He finds him, but Rama refuses to return to the kingdom until he has completed his period of banishment. Bharata places Rama's wooden sandals on the throne and rules in his name. In exile, Rama faces his greatest trial: the abduction of Sita by the demon Ravana. She is carried off to the demon's island kingdom, Lanka (thought to be present-day Sri Lanka). Rama locates her with the help of the monkey-god Hanuman, fights Ravana with Hanuman's army of monkeys, and is victorious. He is reunited with Sita, and, his period of exile being over, he and Sita triumphantly return to the kingdom. He is finally crowned king, ushering in Rama Rajya. The story doesn't end there, however. It turns out that Sita is pregnant, and people start gossiping that she was seduced by Ravana. Although she is innocent, she is sent into exile in the forest. There she gives birth to twin sons, Luv and Kush. She brings them up in poverty in the forest, and when she is

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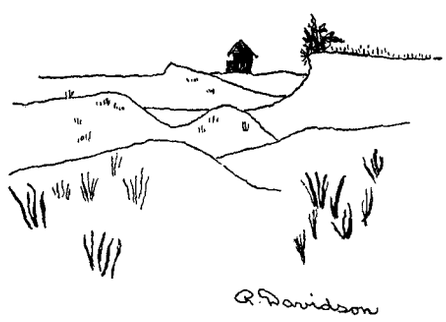
eventually reunited with Rama she calls upon Mother Earth to testify to her innocence: the earth thereupon parts under her feet and swallows her up.

The Ramayana was adapted for television, at the government's invitation, by Ramanand Sagar, a successful producer of Hindi films. Sagar's Ramayana was broadcast on a hundred and four Sunday mornings, each episode lasting a half hour or so. The screenplay was formulaic, with one-dimensional characterizations and declamatory dialogue. What was notable about the serial was its pageantry—sumptuous settings and brightly colored, shiny costumes. It was a mixture of soap opera and national mythology, designed to appeal to everyone, from teen-agers to old people.

The initial broadcasts of the Ramayana were so popular that the government immediately asked B. R. Chopra, one of the most celebrated commercial producers in the history of Indian cinema, to adapt another Hindu epic, the Mahabharata ("The Great Epic of the Bharata Dynasty"), for television. The Mahabharata, in the form in which it has come down to us, is a compilation of numerous legends, didactic stories, and ethical and theological homilies; like the Ramayana, it is filled with heroic action. (The Bhagavad Gita, one of the philosophical segments of the Mahabharata, is almost as well known as the Ramayana.) It was compiled by Vyasa around 400 A.D. and runs to some hundred thousand Sanskrit couplets (about seven times the length of the Iliad and the Odyssey put together). In a modern Hindi translation, it takes up some five thousand printed pages. (P. Lal, a Sanskrit scholar and professor of English at the University of Calcutta, has been working on an English translation of the poem for ten years, doing about twenty couplets a day.) The Mahabharata tells of a dynastic struggle between two branches of an ancient royal family, the Bharatas, who supposedly lived between 1400 and 1000 B.C. One branch, the Kauravas, is the progeny of the blind prince Dhrtarastra; the other branch, the Pandavas, is the progeny of Dhrtarastra's younger brother, Pandu. Although Dhrtarastra is the rightful heir to the throne, he is passed over because of his blindness, and Pandu becomes king. When Pandu dies at a young age, Dhrtarastra succeeds to the throne after all. Their sons carry on a feud, and it continues for generations. In the course of the narrative, five brothers marry one woman; a god turns up in the guise of a dog; the Pandavas lose their kingdom in a fateful throw of the dice and are banished, retiring into the forest for thirteen years. There is a climactic battle in which Krishna, who, like Rama, is popularly regarded as an avatar of Vishnu, is a participant. The epic ends with an arduous journey by the Pandavas to the gates of Heaven.

Chopra made ninety-three hour-long television episodes of the epic. They were broadcast between October of 1988 and July of 1990—on Sunday mornings, like the Ramayana. Much was made of illegitimate births, abductions of beautiful women, and treacherous goings on. Every ingredient of life, it seemed, was thrown into the pot. The serial is said to have been the most popular soap opera ever made. Chopra boasts that it had the most viewers of any serial produced in the world—that ninety-two per cent of the Indian viewing public saw most of it. Independent observers have estimated that eighty-five per cent of the viewing public saw all ninety-three episodes. Those figures do not include the people all over the world who have by now seen it on videocassette. The Mahabharata is currently being shown on television in Great Britain. (The Peter Brook version of the Mahabharata, which was shown on public television in America some months ago, has nothing to do with Chopra's extravaganza.)

It is said that during the broadcasts of both serials the whole country came to a virtual standstill. Taxis, bicycles, and rickshaws disappeared from the streets. Telephones stopped ringing. Prayers and cremation rites were postponed. Ministers, civil servants, housewives, shopkeepers, hawkers, prisoners, water carriers, sweepers, scavengers—everyone dropped whatever he or she was doing to watch a screen in someone's house or in the village square. People who didn't have a television would often gather by the window of a house where people were watching the serial, so that they could at least listen.



The two epics cast considerable light on the evolution of Hinduism from 400 B.C. to 200 A.D. And, though the Ramayana and the Mahabharata do not have the status of Scripture, some Hindus regard them as sacred and believe that there were gods and goddesses who actually lived in the world. This belief has now been reinforced by television. Many viewers watching the epics acted as if they were worshipping at a temple. When Rama or Krishna—or other gods, like Shiva—came on the screen, viewers might light a lamp in front of the screen and pray to it. The men who made the television epics and the players who acted in them are being written about and venerated as devout people. They themselves claim that they made the serials not for money—although, of course, a lot of money has been made from them—but for devotional reasons.

While the serials may have opened the floodgates to a Hindu-revivalist tide, it is a tide that had been coming in since Independence: the years since 1947 have seen an attempt to emphasize the Sanskrit elements of written and spoken Hindi and an increase in the study of Sanskrit classics; a revival of ancient forms of dancing; a proliferation of societies to teach the Bhagavad Gita; the establishment of leagues to protect cows; the emergence of several hundred chauvinist holy men who claim to be reincarnations of gods and are worshipped as gods. Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru saw this tide approaching, and they tried to stem it by preaching and teaching secularism and by stressing Hindu-Muslim unity.

The resurgence of Hinduism and ancient Hindu values bears some resemblance to the fundamentalist movements among Sikhs and Muslims in India—and, indeed, among Muslims in Iran and other parts of the Middle East. Orthodox Hindus here proudly declare that India is on the verge of Rama Rajya. They say that they were sat upon by Muslims for three hundred years, during the Mogul rule and by the British for a hundred years during the Raj, and are finally about to come into their own. Many Hindu intellectuals defend the serials as an

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expression of Indic civilization and national culture, and they defend Hindu "fundamentalism" as something very different from the fundamentalism of other religions, pointing out that Hindus have no holy book and no prophet; that, unlike Muslims and Christians, they don't believe in one god or in proselytizing; and that Hinduism is more a way of life than a religion, since Hindus, as a rule, make no real distinction between the secular and the sacred.

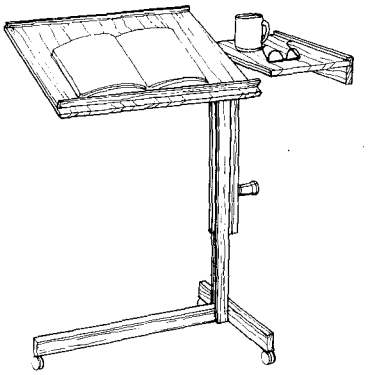
Muslims, Sikhs, and Christians (about seventeen per cent of India's population is non-Hindu) have seen in the serials an attempt by the government to fill the airwaves with symbols of Hindu civilization and to drum up Hindu votes. Many of them now fear for their way of life, and perhaps with good reason: in recent years, there has been more religious violence in India than at any other time since the Partition and Independence, when a million Hindus and Muslims were killed and twelve million were made refugees. Various demands have been made of late for televised treatments of non-Hindu texts. Not long ago, a Muslim historical drama, "The Sword of Tipu Sultan," based on the eighteenth-century leader Tipu Sultan, was broadcast in fifty-two installments; and the Bible is currently being filmed in Kerala. (A fifth of Kerala's population is Christian; Kerala's voters have often voted Communist, and the Congress Party initiated the project with the aim of courting the Christian vote. In this election, Kerala voted Congress.)

Oddly, however, at the moment the greatest television resources are being devoted to what is essentially a Buddhist story, although a Buddhist minority scarcely exists in India. Preparations are under way to film a narrative about Ashoka, who was an emperor of India in the third century B.C. Ashoka is not a religious figure on the scale of Rama and Krishna, but he went through a religious conversion to Buddhism (not unlike St. Paul's conversion to Christianity) and became a preëminent lay disciple of Buddha. His reign is remembered as the most enlightened and peaceful period in Indian history. The story of Ashoka will be produced by Om Prakash Ralhan, who, though he is not as well known as Sagar or Chopra, has directed, acted in, and written screenplays for dozens of films. It will all be filmed in what is called Ashoka City—a location now being created in a scrub area north of Bombay. Last year, the Dalai Lama laid the cornerstone of the city, as a gesture of Buddhist support. Ralhan says that he is going to employ fifty thousand extras, ten thousand horses, and a thousand elephants, and that his show will outdo the previous serials, for it will employ top Western technicians, it will be filmed in both Hindi and English, and it will be dubbed in many languages. According to the publicity releases, it will be "the biggest," "the most expensive," "the most spectacular" show ever. Non-Hindus say that the making of the Ashoka story for the airwaves is only more Hindu propaganda, in that Ashoka and Buddha were born Hindus, and many Hindus regard Buddhism as a reform movement within Hinduism. In any case, it seems doubtful whether any of these projects will have anything like the impact of the Hindu serials.

Congress Party members and other critics of the Bharatiya Janata Party link the rise of the B.J.P. with the Hindu serials. Within the past five years, its leaders have certainly exploited the religious mood that the serials created. (The Party has even made use of chariots, bows and arrows, and other props that recall the serials.) In the eyes of many people, the B.J.P. is a political front for extremist, "Hindu first" social and paramilitary organizations, like the Vishva Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council), which are behind a campaign to build a temple at the supposed birthplace of Rama, in the Uttar Pradesh city of Ayodhya. The campaign, which caught fire after the broadcast of the Ramayana, has led to the worst Hindu-Muslim tension in India since the Partition. There is speculation that the campaign may have laid the foundation for permanent oppression of the Muslim minority.

Ayodhya is the historic site of the Babri Masjid (Mosque of Babar), built in 1528 by a lieutenant of the Mogul Emperor Babar, who reigned from 1526 to 1530. In this century, Hindus have come to believe that the site of the mosque is the Ramjanmabhoomi (Birthplace of Rama), partly because almost next to the mosque is the old Hanumangarhi (Hanuman Temple)—Hanuman being the god most closely associated with Rama. In 1949, during

Lay Down Your Arms



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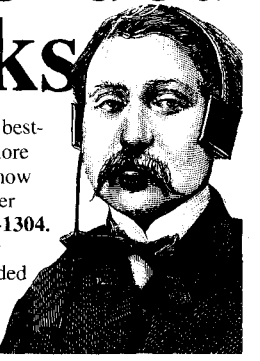

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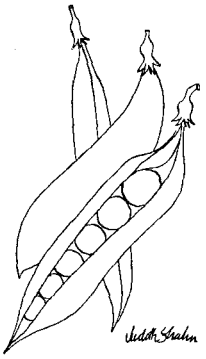
the Hindu-Muslim tension following the Partition and Independence, Hindus smuggled idols of Rama into the mosque. (Hindus customarily worship idols, but Muslims forbid all representations of God.) The new Indian government in the state, in order to avoid a Hindu-Muslim clash, declared the premises of the mosque a disputed area and locked the gates—without, however, removing the idols. Then began a legal wrangle of suits and countersuits, appeals and counterappeals, the Hindus seeking to keep the idols in place, and the Muslims trying to have them removed and regain possession of their mosque. In 1984, the Vishva Hindu Parishad, in Delhi, called for the "liberation" of the Ramjanmabhoomi and planned a week-long Rath-Yatra (Chariot Procession, with motorized chariots in this case) from the neighboring state of Bihar to Ayodhya. The plans were aborted by Mrs. Gandhi's assassination. In 1986, the Hindus increased their demands: they called for the construction of a temple to Rama on the site of the mosque. That demand was eagerly picked up and supported by the B.J.P. Meanwhile, Muslims had been holding nationwide protests of their own, and demanding the "liberation" of the mosque; their calls became more strident after February of 1986, when a district judge ordered that Hindus be allowed to worship there.

The fate of the mosque became a political and religious football. On September 30, 1989, the Vishva Hindu Parishad organized a Shila Puja (Consecration of Temple Bricks). In each Indian village with a population of two thousand or more—the participating villages numbered some two hundred thousand—a brick was consecrated, and stamped "Shri Rama" ("Respected Rama"). Some of the bricks were then taken by volunteers to Ayodhya, and, on November 9th, the foundation was laid for a temple to Rama, the plinth only a hundred and ninety-two feet away from the mosque. The government of V. P. Singh, who had succeeded Rajiv as Prime Minister earlier that year, halted work on the temple, and in subsequent months it tried to bring the leaders of all the groups together, but with no success. In October, 1990, the B.J.P. finally began a Rath-Yatra—this time from Somnath, a town in Gujarat, to Ayodhya, nearly a thousand miles away. The B.J.P. succeeded in mobilizing tens of thousands of volunteers from all over the country to converge on Ayodhya. L. K. Advani, the leader of the B.J.P., rode in a motorized chariot, much like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata heroes on television, and many of his followers dressed in costumes like the ones in the serials. Carrying bows and arrows, they tried to storm the mosque. The government, fearing Hindu-Muslim riots in the state and beyond, garrisoned Ayodhya with huge security forces, and the Hindu zealots were beaten back by tear gas and by shooting. A few people were killed and many injured. Although the government technically thwarted the goal of the B.J.P. Rath-Yatra, the Party's cause received enormous national publicity. Even so, it was a surprise, and one of the greatest upsets of the recent election, when the B.J.P. captured the state assembly of Uttar Pradesh. Now, at least in theory, it is in a position to do what it likes in Ayodhya.



MORE than at any other time since Independence, there is political turmoil in India, and it is aggravated by the fact that politicians of every stripe are exploiting religious differences—so that, for the most part, party labels have become meaningless. Secessionist fires, which have been raging for the last decade in Punjab, Kashmir, and Assam, are now out of control; in fact, Punjab and Kashmir have been turned into police states, and killings there by the military over the last few years have been ominously reminiscent of the killings by West Pakistan's military in East Pakistan in 1971, which led to the breakup of Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh. Political observers are saying that if India doesn't find a looser federal structure, with real autonomy for states and regions, it may suffer a similar fate.

At the same time, India's civil service, its judiciary, and its other once stable, autonomous governing institutions have been compromised to the point where they are now mere handmaidens of politicians. Corruption and intimidation at every level of society have brought into being a new moneyed class, which exercises ruthless power. Examples of corruption abound. Just now, one story concerns Sharad Pawar and the wedding he held for his daughter in Bombay some months ago, when he was Chief Minister of Maharashtra. It is said that at least a million dollars was spent on the occasion—a large sum for a wedding anywhere, and, in a country with an average per-capita income of three hundred and twenty-seven dollars, a staggering one. Of course, no money was actually exchanged: people just got the idea of what kind of wedding his daughter should have, and everything was made available. Another story goes that when the government, in order to raise hard currency, recently sold twenty tons of gold on the world market, the price it claimed to have received was less than the prevailing world-market price, and politicians and officials pocketed the difference. A much more serious example of alleged governmental corruption has to do with the carrying out of the agreement that Union Carbide reached with the Indian government in 1989 on compensation for the explosion in the pesticide plant of the company's subsidiary in Bhopal, in Madhya Pradesh, in 1984. (Forty-four tons of noxious methyl-isocyanate gas were released into the atmosphere. It is said to have been the worst factory-based accident in history, and the long-term effects on people who live in the area are, of course, still unknown.) Under the agreement, the parent company has paid four hundred and seventy million dollars to the Indian government, which is supposed to be distributing the money to the families of the thirty-three hundred people killed and the many thousands known to have been injured as a result of the accident. The agreement is under court challenge as inadequate, and in the meantime, it is said, politicians are busy doctoring the lists of claimants—substituting names of friends and political workers for those of the poor, illiterate families of many injured and dead—so that when the money is finally doled out it will line the pockets of the politicians' supporters.

There is confusion and uncertainty even in the conduct of external affairs—an area in which there was formerly a consensus. Since Indira Gandhi came to office, in 1966, India has acted like an important regional power—now

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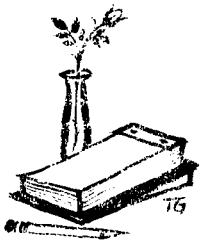
arming guerrillas from Sri Lanka, now training militants from East Pakistan, now subverting and taking over the Protectorate of Sikkim, now bringing Nepal to heel with an economic boycott, now refusing to come to terms with Bangladesh over river waters—but the day of reckoning may be at hand. In addition, the end of the Cold War means that India can no longer cynically play the Soviet Union against the United States, as it has done for so long, and get, for instance, arms from one, and food and technology from the other—a kind of realpolitik which was the true basis of much of India's foreign policy, notwithstanding the government's profession of striving to maintain moral neutrality between the capitalist and the Communist camps.



The abandonment of Communism in Eastern Europe means that India can no longer look to the Soviet Union as an economic model for the country's development. In fact, India is much like the present-day Soviet Union in being economically at sea, and the financial condition of the country is grimmer than it has ever been. Among other things, weak governments—India has had four Prime Ministers in a space of two years—have taken their economic toll. Inflation is running at fourteen per cent. The budgetary process is out of kilter. Foreign reserves are exhausted. With current outstanding foreign debts of seventy-one billion dollars, India is the third-largest debtor nation in the developing world, after Brazil and Mexico, and, for the first time, it is in danger of defaulting on its debts. To tide the country over, Rao's government is seeking an emergency loan of anywhere from five billion to seven billion dollars from the International Monetary Fund, but the loan, if it is approved, will be granted with strict conditions, one being that the country relax its protectionist policy.

Rao's government has just introduced a series of economic proposals that are intended to attract foreign capital. The proposals would permit multinational corporations to control Indian companies—have Indian subsidiaries—by allowing them to hold as much as fifty-one per cent of a company's stock. Until now, multinational corporations have been restricted to forty-per-cent ownership. (In 1977, when that restriction was applied without exception, both I.B.M. and Coca-Cola chose to pull out of India rather than surrender majority interest in their subsidiaries. Only with a controlling interest, they felt, could they make Indians privy, for instance, to computer patents or to beverage formulas.) The new economic proposals would also make direct foreign investment possible in thirty-four major Indian industries, among them transportation, food processing, tourism, and manufacture of electrical equipment. (As a spur to foreign investors, Rao's government has already devalued India's currency by twenty-two per cent.) The proposals are an important step toward dismantling the socialist controls on the country's economy, even though the government will continue to bar foreigners from directly investing in such major industries as motor vehicles, coal, petroleum, arms, atomic energy, and drugs. And the government is seeking to raise taxes not only on Indian corporations but also on such luxury items as cars, cigarettes, refrigerators, videocassette recorders, and cameras; it is hoped that the new taxes will discourage consumption and reduce the budget deficit, which has doubled since the mid-nineteen-seventies. As expected, these proposals are running into heavy political opposition—after all, the national socialist consensus of almost half a century is being turned on its head—but since no party wants Rao's government to fall over the budget vote (that might precipitate a new general election) it is assumed here that the proposals requiring a Parliamentary bill will be enacted. (Others, like the devaluation, required only an executive order.) Since the announcement of these reforms, negotiations for the I.M.F. loan have begun in earnest. All the same, it will be some years before the country feels the effect of the reforms, and, anyway, foreigners may need many more inducements before they begin to invest in India in a significant way.

In political and official circles here—and also among people generally—there is a sense of dread about the economic, political, and religious direction of the country which I don't remember encountering in any of my other visits over the past twenty-five years.

—Ved Mehta

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BOOKS

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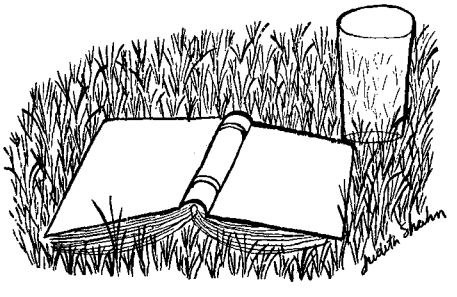
FICTION

THE FIREMAN'S FAIR, by Josephine Humphreys (Viking; $19.95). This lovely, wrenching novel seems at first to be about the pleasures and dangers of stepping out of one's life in order to get a good look at it. Thirty-two-year-old Rob Wyatt is a romantic, and when a hurricane hits Charleston he has already begun to move toward the margins of things—he's left his luxury condo, returned to the seedy island community of his childhood summers, and joined the volunteer fire department there. But it isn't until after the storm that he finally quits his law firm, figuring that the general devastation (power lines down, houses swept out to sea, boats marooned in treetops) will obscure his own, small defection. Newly unemployed, Rob drifts along; he bird-watches, dispenses emergency supplies, keeps an eye on his aging parents, and observes pretty women from the edges of cocktail parties, waiting for something to happen. But Ms. Humphreys' real interest lies in what sneaks up on us, just inside our peripheral vision. When both welcome and horrifying changes do occur, dreamy Rob is surprised by his own part in them, and we are caught off guard as well; charmed, forgiving of his delusions, we have become implicated in their consequences.

SHE WAS A QUEEN, by Maurice Collis (New Directions; $12.95, paper). Around the year 1287, the Pagān dynasty in Burma fell to adjacent China, which was then ruled by Kublai Khan. The fall was sudden, chaotic, and, on the Burmese side, ignoble, including an attempt by the vanquished king to butcher his own slaves so that the enemy wouldn't profit from them. It was the kind of world in which luxury and decadence converge—in which the most marvellous magic tricks turn the stomach, the most animated dances forecast ruin, and only torture seems capable of revealing character. Into this world is dropped a beautiful village girl whose most important possessions are her natural grasp of human affairs and her unshakable confidence in her own instincts. She becomes the queen of the title, and you will not forget her. Originally published in 1937, this novel has just been reissued as part of New Directions' Revived Modern Classics Series. Its events are based on historical chronicles and its imaginative threads on Collis's twenty years' experience as a British civil servant in Burma who longed to be watching the ballet in Paris and listening to the Bloomsbury group in London. His queen is the fruit of his longing.

GENERAL

COLD WARRIOR: JAMES JESUS ANGLETON, THE C.I.A.'S MASTER SPY HUNTER, by Tom Mangold (Simon & Schuster; $24.95). When he was forced to retire, in 1975, James J. Angleton (who died in 1987) had worked at the O.S.S. and the C.I.A. for more than thirty years—twenty of them as the head of C.I.A. counterintelligence. Protected by his job's secrecy—he was not only above suspicion but beyond question—Angleton, the author argues, wrecked the C.I.A.'s morale, destroyed many intelligence sources, and confused or alienated the intelligence services of our allies. This provocative biography demonstrates that a man of spectacularly bad judgment can do as much harm to an intelligence agency as an enemy spy. Angleton was a close friend of Kim Philby, for example (and believed in his innocence until Philby fled to Moscow), and then fell under the spell of a K.G.B. defector, Anatoliy Golitsyn, who had been diagnosed as suffering from paranoia by the C.I.A's own psychologist. Mr. Mangold, an English investigative reporter, sets forth Angleton's disastrous doings with a workmanlike precision rare in books about espionage.



THE PARIS OF HENRI IV: ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM, by Hilary Ballon (Architectural History Foundation/M.I.T.; $35). This delightful book elegantly documents Henri IV's architectural programs of 1605-10 for the city of Paris, with special emphasis on two incomparable squares, the Place Royale and the Place Dauphine, and helps us understand the surprisingly gentle humanity and charm that those urban groupings possess. Both were built in a consciously French, non-Roman mode, of brick with stone trim. The Place Royale was intended to encourage the silk trade and the crafts, while the Place Dauphine, with the adjacent Pont Neuf and Rue Dauphine, replaced the closed garden of the old palace with a public platform from which the wonders of the city could be viewed by everyone. The author stresses Henri IV's avoidance of sweeping plans and of the destruction of medieval Paris, and his concentration on specific infilling projects, meant to enhance the city's image as the capital of all France and to improve its workability for all its citizens. In this, Henri stands in clear contrast to the later, absolutist shapers of France, from Louis XIV to Haussmann and the followers of Le Corbusier, and can emerge as a hero to advanced contemporary criticism, which prefers context to cataclysm in urban planning any day.

NOTE: Alec Wilkinson's "The Riverkeeper," a collection of three pieces—about the Provincetown fishing fleet, a Hudson River guardian, and Admiralty Island, Alaska—has been published by Knopf ($20). Much of the text originally appeared in *The New Yorker*.

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MILTON GREENSTEIN

MILTON GREENSTEIN, who had been with us almost forty-six years as legal counsel, vice-president, and friend, died on July 29th, at the age of seventy-nine. Milton came to us as a young lawyer, and he and the magazine took to each other instantly; for the remainder of his life, he was totally devoted to it. People who had trust in Milton had complete trust: over the years, countless staff members sought his financial advice, and many, including our first editor, Harold Ross, made him an executor of their wills. A longtime staff member said last week, on hearing of his death, "People felt entirely comfortable with letting him see the context of their lives."

Many of those lives had unorthodox bumps and curves, and Milton took them in unperturbed stride. The widow of a writer whose considerable talents often veered into hubristic sprees recalls that her husband had the odd habit of negotiating leases on fancy apartments he could not possibly afford. Next morning, Milton would quietly nullify the nutty deal. A staff member who is a veteran of a painful divorce recalls how Milton walked the streets with him night after night to help him find new digs. "Basically, he was the finest family lawyer working in an office I have ever known," a colleague told us. "He never hesitated to give advice, and if we thought some of it wrong we were under no compulsion to take it." Our second editor, William Shawn, saddened by the news of Milton's death, said to us the other day, "I have been thinking about him a great deal. Through all the years I worked with him—decades, really—I never knew him to think about his own interests, only about what would benefit others."

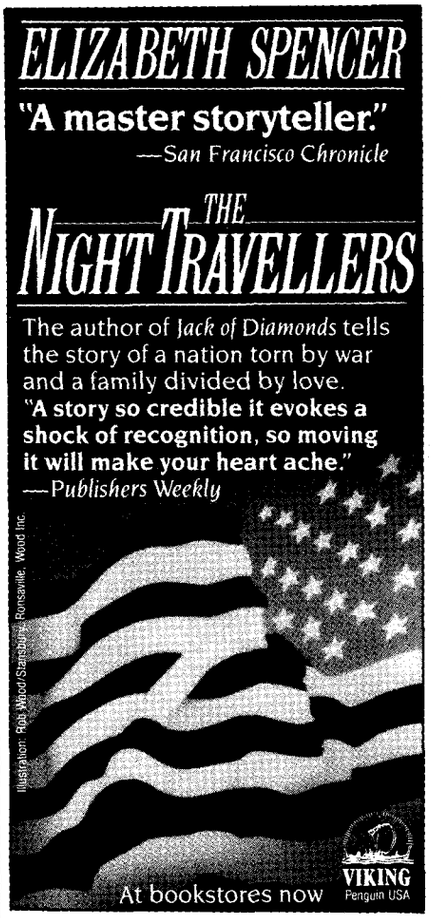
Milton had a fierce, almost holy belief in editorial independence. For many years, he was the actual point of intersection between the magazine's business and editorial departments—a role requiring great tact and understanding, and often open to misinterpretation, even resentment. He was what a close associate has referred to as "that thing: the fall guy, the man who has to say no." A young woman who works here has said, with eloquence, "He represented the luxury of having an actual person where conflicts between business and editorial could take place. Because of him, I learned how to spell a word that had always given me trouble: 'liaison.'"

His defense of the rights of writers and artists was carried out on many fronts. The slightest hint of copyright infringement aroused his ire, and, through the many years he read here for libel, when the question arose of making a fix to avoid possible trouble he always did his best to leave the text intact. Some years ago, while the magazine was running an incisive series on the dangers to the environment of various pesticides, phone calls came in from giant chemical companies, brusquely insisting that further installments be cancelled or lawsuits would follow. Milton had the same answer for all the calls: "Everything in those articles has been checked and is true. Go ahead and sue." No one did.

Mr. Ross once told Milton to keep a sharp eye out for any interjection of political opinion in a baseball piece by a writer, now long dead, who was known for views several kilometres left of center. Milton read along, page after page, enjoying the piece immensely, but his eyes widened when he read that after a batter had smacked the ball over the fence "the masses rose as one man in the stands and wildly cheered." Reluctantly, Milton exercised his blue pencil.

Milton relished New York, and especially the lively neighborhood bustle of the West Side, where he lived. He was a devoted family man, proud of his wife's work, with blind students in the public schools, and bursting with admiration for the achievements of his daughters, one a professor of French literature and film, the other a distinguished lawyer. He was a strange one, all right, in the sense that he denied himself any frills that might betray an excess of material comfort, or even run-of-the-mill extravagance. He once told a devoted friend who rejected his advice not to spend money on travel to a far-off place, "You invest in living. I don't seem to have that ability."

Milton partly retired some years ago, retaining an office here and finding it hard not to come in several days a week. We find it far harder to grasp that he is gone.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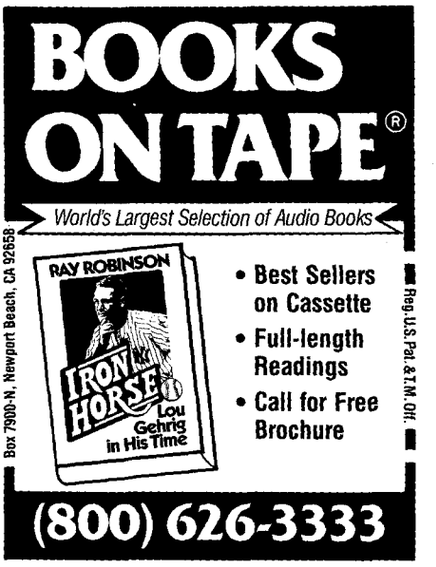

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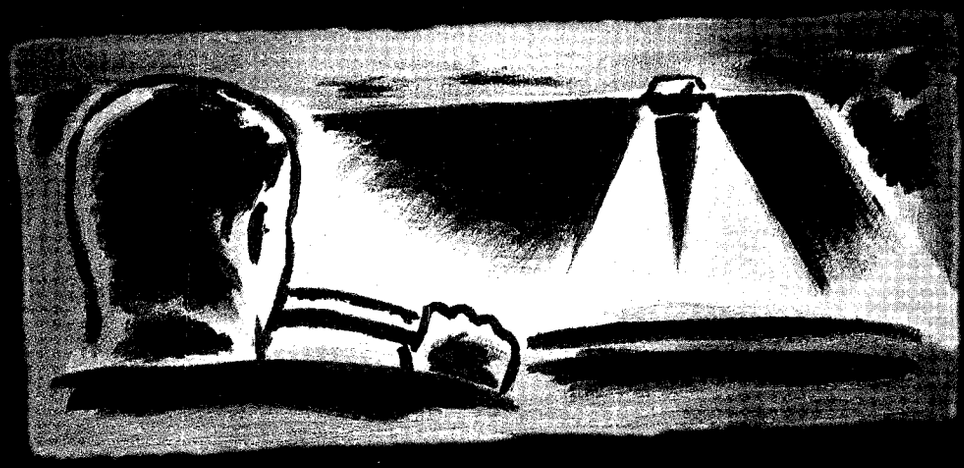

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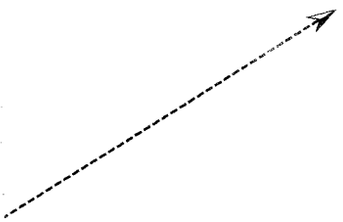

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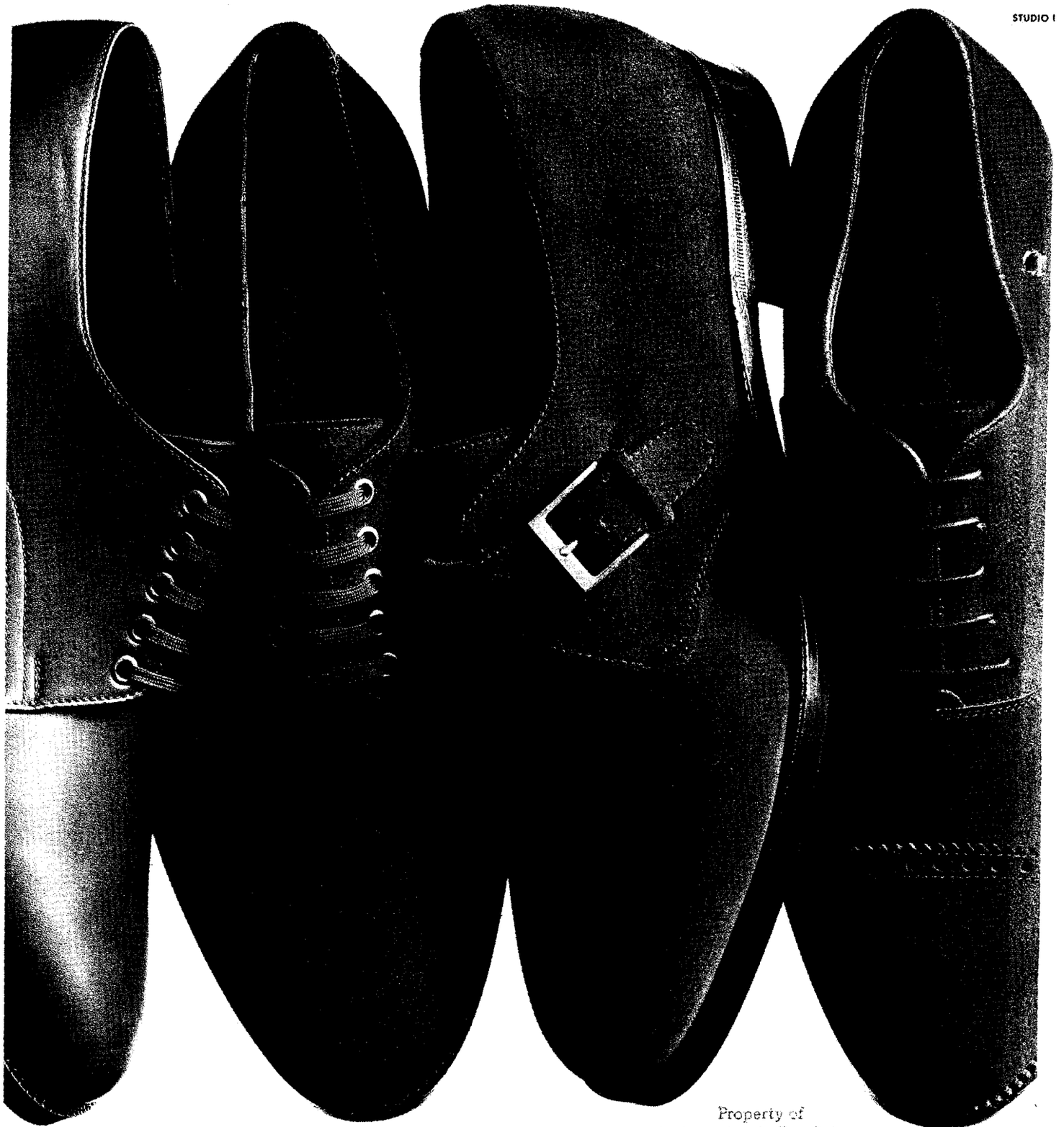

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